

ANSWERS

BY THE

Associate Presbytery,

TO

Reasons of Dissent, given in to the said Presbytery, at Stirling, December 23, 1742; as also, the Representation and Petition dictated to their Clerk, and Reasons of Dissent and Secession, given in to them at Edinburgh, February 3. 1743; by the Reverend Mr. Thomas Nairn, Minister of the Gospel at Abbotshall.

Together with

A Declaration and Defence

Of the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY'S Principles anent the present Civil Government.



EDINBURGH:

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AN S W E R

BY THE
Associate Librarian

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A Declaration and Defence

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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THE INTRODUCTION.

IT is now a considerable Time, since the Lord, in his gracious Sovereignty, did first determine the *Associate Presbytery* to ask for *the old Paths, where is the good Way*, and was pleased to employ their Hands to *build the old waste Places*. And, as their Endeavours this Way have been, all along, through much Weakness in themselves, and manifold Difficulties in their Work; while, at the same Time, they have more and more become a *Spectacle unto the World, Men wondred at*, and as a *Sect every where spoken against*; being likewise encompassed with *Archers, that have sorely grieved them, and shot at them, and hated them*: From the Consideration of these things, together with the many other breaking Providences of our Day, it becomes especial Matter of thankful Remembrance and Praise, that, instead of being altogether scattered, each of them with his Hand turned against his Fellow, the Lord hath been pleased to preserve them in the Way of Truth, Love and Unity among themselves, without any Breach, beside what hath taken place in the late Procedure of Mr. *Nairn*. And, though the Attack which he has made upon the publick Testimony, the pleasant Unity, and the decent Order of the *Associate Presbytery*, gives a new Call for enquiring into the Grounds of the Lord's Controversy with his Heritage: Yet, as the Presbytery doubts not, but that the Lord will overrule this Event unto his own Glory, and the Advantage of his Cause; so they would hope that it shall prove a Mean, in the Lord's Hand, for the Increase and Establishment of Love, Unity and Uniformity among them in the Way of Truth.

The Presbytery have, for some Years bygone, had under their Consideration the weighty Affair of renewing our Solemn *Covenants*. Since they first set their Faces toward this solemn Work, a Variety of Bars occurring in their Way from Time to Time, have retarded the same beyond their first Expectation; particularly, when they came to apprehend and agree upon the Necessity of having the Way unto that momentous Step paved by an *Act*, concerning the *Doctrine of Grace*: And, as the passing of this *Act* was not got overtaken, till the Meeting of Presbytery at *Edinburgh*, in *October 1742*, so a new and quite unexpected Bar did then begin to be laid in the Presbytery's Way toward a

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Renovation of our Solemn Covenants, by the Conduct of Mr. Nairn. But, as the Presbytery have been, and are more and more satisfied anent the Clearness of their Call in Providence, unto the Ripening and Reviving of that Work, though the Delays therein, which have been necessarily occasioned from Time to Time, do afford Cause of humble and self-judging Enquiry into the Reasons why the Lord has been refusing to carry on that Work more powerfully, and to make Mountains in the Way thereof more speedily become a Plain; yet the Presbytery desire to reverence the Lord's Wisdom, and to acknowledge his Goodness, in taking this Way of calling them out unto a more humble and submissive waiting upon himself for Direction, both as to the Manner and Season of going about that great Work, and as to what other Steps are necessary to be taken, and Matters to be expedite, in order thereunto; while, at the same Time, they desire to look upon the Conduct of Providence that Way, as an Evidence that the Lord hath, in a special Manner, taken the Timing of this momentous Work into his own Hand; and that he will overrule all the *Levies* that have been cast into the Way thereof, for bringing it about in such a Way and Season, as that, tho' what he does we know not now, yet we shall know hereafter, when his People shall rejoice in him, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that Day.

The Scheme whereby Mr. Nairn hath interrupted the Presbytery's Procedure toward the above solemn Work, is what he never gave them Ground to suspect he had any Bias unto, till their Meeting at *Edinburgh*, in *October* last Year. The Occasion and Manner of his then commencing any Difference with them in that Matter, and of carrying on the same afterwards unto the Height it hath now arrived at, are briefly as follows.

The Committee, which had been appointed to prepare an Overture anent the Renovation of our Covenants, did lay a Draught thereof before the Presbytery, when met at *Colfargie*, in *April* 1742, whereupon it then got the first reading. At the same Meeting (Mr. Nairn being present) the Presbytery unanimously appointed another Committee to prepare and propose unto the Presbytery, against the first Occasion, a short Confession of the Evil of the *Anti-government Scheme*, which some formerly in Accession to the Presbytery had espoused, that it might be added unto the Acknowledgment of Sins in the Overture about renewing the Covenants; as also, to have under their Consideration, at what Place in the Acknowledgment of Sins the said Addition should be inserted.

When the Presbytery met at *Edinburgh*, in *October* 1742, the Overture anent renewing the Covenants was read for the second Time.

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Time. After the *Acknowledgment of Sins* was read forward to a particular Period, a Member of the said Committee put the Presbytery in Mind of their foresaid Appointment, and proposed an additional *Paragraph*, which had been conceived as what might come best in at that Place: And this *Paragraph* being read, the *Moderator* proceeded to require the Judgment of *Members* thereanent, in Order. As Mr. *Nairn* was next after the *Moderator* in the Roll, so his Judgment was first enquired into; whereupon, to the Presbytery's Surprise, he began to alledge some things in favour of the *Anti-government Scheme*, and turned pretty hot in disputing about the same; though he was not, at this Time, come the length of pleading absolutely for it, but asserted strongly that he had Scruples that Way. When some Time had been spent in reasoning with Mr. *Nairn*, the *Moderator* proceeded in requiring the Judgment of *Members* upon the *Paragraph*; and, after some Amendments, it was agreed to in the Tenor following.

‘ As we desire to be humbled before the Lord for the *National Apostasy*, under which the Lord's Remnant through the Land have been groaning, while our Rulers have not only neglected, but contradicted their Duty, of espousing and supporting the covenanted Principles and Reformation of this Church, whereby they have greatly provoked the Lord to Anger: So we desire to be humbled for the *dangerous Extreme* that some have gone into, of impugning the present Civil Authority over these Nations, and Subjection thereunto in lawful Commands, on account of the Want of these Qualifications Magistrates ought to have by the Word of God and our Covenants; even although they allow us in the free Exercise of our Religion, and are not manifestly unhinging the Liberties of the Kingdom: An Opinion and Practice contrary to the plain Tenor of *Scripture*, and to the Principles of this Church in her *Confession and Covenants*, and of all other reformed Churches: And that some few others carry their Zeal against the Defections and Evils of the Times to the *dangerous Extreme*, of espousing Principles in favours of propagating Religion by offensive Arms; quite contrary to that Disposition which ought to be in all the professed Followers of Christ, who came not to *destroy Mens Lives*, but to *save them*.’

Mr. *Nairn* again expressed Dissatisfaction with this *Paragraph*, and offered a *Dissent*; but, being desired to think more deliberately before making such a Step, and to remember that the Matter was still but an *Overture*, he desisted.

The Presbytery then proceeding to hear the rest of the *Acknowledgment of Sins*, and the *Bond*, read before them; after deli-

deliberate Reasonings and sundry Amendments, the *Vote* (being the *first* Vote upon this whole Affair) was proposed, *Approve of this whole Overture, or not?* And it carried unanimously by all Members present, except Mr. *Nairn*, APPROVE. Mr. *Nairn* having offered a *Dissent* from the forementioned *Paragraph*, and having been prevailed with to delay it, he continued the Delay till next meeting of Presbytery, upon Condition that the Door should stand open for his *dissenting* then, if he should incline to do so, and that he should have a Copy of the *Bond* under his Consideration till that Time; which was granted: And, at the same Time, the Presbytery agreed, that there should be Access for *all Members*, present or absent, to propose any Difficulties they might have against next Meeting, and allowed the *Clerk* to furnish them, in the mean Time, with Copies of the *Bond*. The Presbytery appointed, that their next Meeting should be at *Stirling*, December 22. 1742. and agreed that, if the Lord should clear their Way, they would then continue together two Weeks, and enter upon the solemn Work of renewing the *Covenants*.

At *Stirling*, December 22. Mr. *Nairn* signified to the Presbytery, that he was ready to give in the *Dissent* he had offered at last Meeting; but the Presbytery resolved, that, before receiving his *Dissent*, they should have some *extrajudicial* Conference with him thereanent, that Night, whereunto he agreed. A considerable Time having been spent in the said Conference, without Success; the Presbytery, next Day, proposed that *extrajudicial* Conference on the Subject should be continued, and that Mr. *Nairn* should yet delay the giving in his *Dissent*: But, notwithstanding, he offered his *Dissent* under Form of *Instrument*. Much Reasoning and Entreaty was used with him to delay, and wait the Issue of farther Conference, but he still insisting, his *Dissent* was received and read, and the farther Consideration thereof delayed till next Meeting. Thus, a Bar was thrust into the Way of the Presbytery's proceeding, at that Time, to the Renovation of our Solemn *Covenants*.

The Presbytery being met at *Edinburgh*, February 3. 1743. they spent some Part of that Day in Prayer and Conference about Mr. *Nairn's* Affair: But, after some Reasoning with him, they found him obstinate in the Matter, appearing to be filled with Prejudices against his *Brethren*, and to be turning his Face away from them. The Presbytery then proceeded to consider what they should do in this Case: And some *Brethren*, who, at the former Meeting, had proposed a Scruple about the forementioned *Paragraph* standing in the *Confession of Sins*, as they conceived, that the Reduplication of the *Bond* thereupon, would

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would amount unto a Blending of *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical* Matters in the Oath of God, in renewing the *Covenants*, which is not competent unto a *Church judicatory*, these Brethren again insisting upon this *Scruple*, the *Presbytery* agreed, that the said *Paragraph* should be left out, according to their *Act* unanimously passed at that Time, which is subjoined unto the following *Declaration* and *Defence*: And hereupon Mr. *Nairn* dictated a *Representation* and *Petition* to the *Clerk*, after which the *Presbytery* adjourned till Afternoon.

At the Afternoon's *Sederunt*, and after the Minutes of last *Sederunt*, and Mr. *Nairn's Dissent* were read, the *Presbytery*, inclining to use all Lenity with him, appointed a *Committee* to meet at *Linktown*, on the second *Wednesday* of *March* next thereafter, to deal with him about retracting the dangerous and pernicious Principles contained in his *Reasons of Dissent*, and to make Report unto the *Presbytery* at their next Meeting. Hereupon Mr. *Nairn* asked, whether or not the *Petition* he had dictated unto the *Clerk* in the Forenoon was to be granted; and the *Presbytery* refusing, he immediately gave in a Paper under Form of *Instrument*, declining to give any Account of the Matter thereof. After it was read, he indorsed it, *Protestation*, *Secession* and *Appeal*, Mr. *Nairn*, and immediately withdrew; but, while going off, he was cited *apud Acta* to compear before the *Presbytery* in Mr. *Gib's House*, to Morrow, at ten of the Clock Forenoon.

When the *Presbytery* met next Day, Mr. *Nairn* was called, but did not compear. The *Presbytery* immediately removed to the Church, where they had met last *Sederunt*; and finding that the Business of the *Committee* then appointed was superseded, they appointed a *Committee* to meet at *Kirkaldy*, upon the 22 Day of *February* next ensuing, and to prepare an *Overture*, to be laid before the *Presbytery* anent this whole Affair.

The *Committee* accordingly met; and, after spending some Time in Prayer and Conference anent the Matter committed unto them, they agreed, that the first Step to be taken therein, was, to prepare a Draught of *Answers* unto Mr. *Nairn's Reasons of Dissent*, his *Representation* and *Petition*, and his *Reasons of Dissent* and *Secession*, setting the whole Matter in a clear Light: And they appointed some of their Number to prepare the said *Answers*, *quamprimum*.

Accordingly a Draught of [Answers by the Associate *Presbytery*, to Reasons of Dissent given in to the said *Presbytery*, at *Stirling* December 23. 1742; as also, the *Representation* and *Petition* dictated to their *Clerk*, and *Reasons of Dissent* and *Secession* given in to them at *Edinburgh*, February 3. 1743; By the

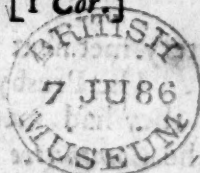
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Reverend Mr. Thomas Nairn, *Minister of the Gospel at Abbotshall: Together with a Declaration and Defence of the Associate Presbytery's Principles anent the present Civil Government*] was laid before the Presbytery, September 14, 1743. After the said Draught had been, at several Sederunts till September 29, read twice over, corrected and amended; the Question was then put, *Approve of this whole Draught, or not?* and it carried, *nemine contradicente*, APPROVE: Wherefore the Presbytery did approve of the said Draught; and, as the Publication thereof was reckoned necessary to pave the Way for farther Procedure with Mr. Nairn, and for the Presbytery's proceeding unto the Renovation of our Solemn Covenants; they appointed that all Expedition should be used in publishing the same; the Tenor whereof follows.

N. B. The numerical Titles afterwards prefixed unto Mr. Nairn's Reasons, are given by the Presbytery.

ERRATA.

Page 11. Line 19. after [our Lord's] read [Command of]
p. 45. l. 3. from the Foot, after [Principles] read [and Reformation.] p. 86. l. 4. read [1 Cor.]



AN-



*ANSWERS by the Associate Presbytery unto
Reasons of Dissent given in to the said Presby-
tery, by Mr. Nairn, at Stirling, December 23.
1742.*

BEFORE engaging directly with Mr. Nairn's Reasons of Dissent, it is necessary to make some Remarks upon the particular Title he is pleased to give thereunto; which is as follows,

Reasons of Dissent by Mr. Thomas Nairn Minister of the Gospel at Linktown, against the Reverend the Associate Presbytery their Testimony against the old Dissenters and some others, in these Words, *We desire to be humbled for the dangerous Extreme that some have gone into, of impugning the present Civil Authority over these Nations, and Subjection thereunto in lawful Commands, on the Account of the Want of these Qualifications Magistrates ought to have, by the Word of God, and our Covenants: And that some few others carry their Zeal against the Desections and Evils of the Times, to that dangerous Extreme of espousing Principles, in favours of propagating Religion by offensive Arms.*

Here it is observable, that the Paragraph in the Confession of Sins, from which Mr. Nairn dissents, is both unfairly cited and interpreted.

1. It is unfairly cited. Not to remark upon his omitting these Passages that express the general Grounds upon which the Presbytery proceeded, in reckoning the Principles and Practices there acknowledged, to be erroneous and sinful. He also passeth over the first Clause of the Paragraph, which is this:

As we desire to be humbled before the Lord, for the National Apostacy under which the Lord's Remnant through the

Land have been groaning, while our Rulers have not only neglected, but contradicted their Duty of espousing and supporting the Covenanted Principles and Reformation of this Church, whereby they have greatly provoked the Lord to Anger: So we desire, &c.

The overleaping of this Clause is the more blameable, that it is connected into *one Sentence* with the rest of the *Paragraph*; so that what Mr. Nairn cites, as the Ground of his Dissent, is but *Part* of a Sentence, which gives not a just View of the Matter: For, as the Tenor of the Words plainly intimates, so he could not but know it was expressly *designed* that, in confessing the *Error* and *Sin* of these Principles and Practices mentioned in the *latter Clause* of the *Paragraph*, the *National Apostacy* should, at the same time, be kept in view, as it is *confessed* in that *former Clause* which he has omitted; while his omitting thereof looks too like the opening of a Door for such *Misconstructions* as these, *viz.* That the *Presbytery*, in confessing the Sin of *unlawful* Opposition to the present Civil Government, were insensible of, or lightly esteem'd these *Evils* wherewith the said Government is chargeable; or, That the *Presbytery* found themselves in some Strait to maintain their Principles, against *Subjection* to the present Civil Government, without *putting the Thumb* upon her Evils, and so dealing *unfaithfully* with the Generation; or, That the *Presbytery* were for confessing the Evil of *unlawful* Contendings against the present Civil Government, in such a shape as might be a *Politick* for recommending themselves unto the said Government.

All such *Insinuations* the *Presbytery* must look upon as exceeding *injurious* to them; and, consequently, they must reckon such a *Citation* of their Words, as may give any Countenance thereto, very *unfair*. But moreover,

2. The *Paragraph*, thus unfairly cited, is also unfairly interpreted. Mr. Nairn calls it 'the *Associate Presbytery* their *Testimony* against the *old Dissenters*, and some others.'

As it appears from what Mr. Nairn afterwards alledges, particularly in his *second Reason of Dissent*, That, by the *old Dissenters*, he means those Persons who have struck out against Church and State since the Revolution, and have, for a good many Years, been in connexion with the Rev. Mr. Macmillan; so he interpretes the *Paragraph*, cited by himself, to be the *Presbytery's Testimony* against *them*; yea, he asserts it as expressly as if the *Presbytery* had said so. In Answer whereunto, it must be observed, That every Member of the *Presbytery* could not but know very well, that not only *several Persons*, who *once acceded* to them, were chargeable with the Principles and Practices

Practices complained of as erroneous and sinful, but that also several others through Scotland, whom Mr. Nairn calls *old Dissenters*, had adopted that *Anti-government* Principle which he now defends: And so it necessarily follows, that *their* Principle and Way are, in so far, condemned by the *Presbytery*; nor would the *Presbytery* reckon they were dealing *faithfully*, did they offer to dissemble this. But, as the quarrelled *Paragraph* did, at this Time, stand in an *Overture* of a *Confession of Sins*, the *Presbytery* had not Occasion therein, to deal directly with the *Persons* of any; so it is only *Extremes*, *Principles* and *Practices*, that are directly meddled with, and *Persons* only consequentially. When, therefore, Mr. Nairn mentions this *Paragraph* as a *Testimony* against the *old Dissenters*, and some others, he is, at best, but giving an *indirect*, *secondary* and *consequential* View of the Matter, in the Place and Room of the *direct*, *principal* and *immediate* Scope thereof, which he *smothers*: And thus he puts the Matter into such a shape, as is calculated for no better purpose, than to gather an *Odium* upon the *Presbytery* from some People with whom, it seems, he wants to ingratiate himself, and whose *Principles* he seems attach'd to, for the sake of their *Persons*, as will afterwards appear.

The *Presbytery* now proceeds to consider Mr. Nairn's *Reasons of Dissent*: And however any thing of Argument therein be *scattered* and *loosely* formed; yet, to prevent alledging, that any thing he advances is overlook'd, the *Presbytery* inclines to follow him *κατὰ πρόδασ*, or to consider his *Reasons* in the same Order and Method wherein he lays them down.

R E A S O N I.

‘ That I am sorry to differ from my Reverend Brethren as to the *Stigma* put on these worthy Persons, called *old Dissenters*, and some few others, by the saids Words.’

A N S W E R.

1. As to the *Presbytery's* putting a *Stigma* on the *old Dissenters*, they refer to what has been already said.

2. As to the *Commendation* Mr. Nairn here gives to those he calls *old Dissenters*, it belongs not to the *Question* betwixt the *Presbytery* and him: Only, it cannot escape Observation, that it serves not to give a favourable View of his Dissent, when his very *first* Complaint is of an alledged *Stigma* put upon *certain Persons*; though it be evident, that all Contendings and Complaints in the Church should be *first* and *principally* in favours of *Truth* and *Duty*.

3. How sorry Mr. Nairn was to differ from his Brethren in the present Question, let the World judge; after considering, that the Point in Debate betwixt him and the *Presbytery* was still left open to Reasoning, as hath been declared in the *Introduction*. As yet, therefore, his *Dissent* is *unreasonable*.

R E A S O N II.

‘ That as we are engaged in a good and necessary Work, in renewing our Covenants, National and Solemn League, I apprehend it was nowise suitable to reflect on these worthy Persons, though they should differ from the *Presbytery* in some Points; and that it would been more agreeable to the Principles of Peace and brotherly Love, not to have touched upon such Matters on such an Occasion, seeing they deserve all suitable Regard and Esteem for their Zeal and Honesty, in formerly declaring against the Defections of the established Church, as we do now; after having struggled long in Expectation of getting Abuses amended, but in which we did not prevail: On the contrary, Things turning always worse, we were at last obliged to follow the Example of these old Dissenters, in separating from the established Church, because of her Defections and Corruptions in many Particulars, set forth in our former Declarations, Acts and Testimonies.’

A N S W E R.

1. Here the *Presbytery* is still grievously injur’d, while represented as reflecting upon, disregarding and disesteeming *some Persons*. In Answer whereunto they refer to what is said above.

2. As this Reason turns upon the debated *Paragraph* being inserted in the *Confession of Sins*; so the utter Invalidity thereof appears from this, That the Matter was still under Consideration, as is already declared. Hitherto, therefore, his *Dissent* is *unreasonable*.

R E A S O N III.

‘ That the Points wherein the Reverend *Presbytery* and old Dissenters differ, as to the necessary Qualifications that the supreme Magistrate ought to be possessed of, is of such a Nature as should not been testified against, especially when the *Presbytery* was about to renew the Covenants; because, according to the strict Words of these Covenants, the Dissenters seem to have the better of the Argument: And though, by certain Distinctions, some may be able to satisfy themselves, or others,

‘ that

that they may take or renew these Covenants, and yet swear Allegiance to the present Government, without any Inconsistency; yet that is far from being a clear Matter in the Apprehension of many good and plain-thinking People: And therefore the reviving of that Dispute at this Time may be of dangerous Consequence, and prove a stumbling Block to many in going about the solemn Work in view.

A N S W E R.

1. Here Mr. *Nairn* carries on a *Misrepresentation* of the *Presbytery*, as entering into a Combat with these he calls the old Dissenters. It was somewhat *higher* that the *Presbytery* had in hand, *viz.* to debate with *Evils*; though Mr. *Nairn* seems here to content himself in going *no higher* with his Cause, than to plead for *Persons*.

2. The present Controversy is by no means what necessary Qualifications the supreme Magistrate *ought* to be possess'd of; this is a gross mistating of the Question. The true Point in Debate is this, Whether or not we ought to submit unto the *lawful Commands* of Magistrates that have not *all* these Qualifications?

3. The *Presbytery* by no means had a *swearing of Allegiance* to the present Government in view; as the Government was not the Party they were dealing with. They were dealing with God, and so considering the Duty which his Word binds them to, with Reference to the present Government. And what Ground any have, not to be *clear* about their Principles in this Matter, must be afterwards considered.

4. The *Presbytery* were by no means *reviving* an old Dispute; but considering upon the Method of *quelling* a *living* Dispute, particularly as it had *newly* arisen among some Persons that *acceded* to them. A Supposition of dangerous Consequences is no Rule of Duty, where the Point is antecedently clear; and dangerous Consequences may rather be expected from *countenancing*, than endeavouring to *quell* a *living* Error. As to the *Presbytery's* occasioning any to stumble, by bringing in that Matter in a Renovation of the *Covenants*, Mr. *Nairn* should not have dissented from them, as to that *Manner* of Procedure, at least, 'till once they *concluded* upon it; which they *had not* done.

5. Mr. *Nairn* speaks somewhat *doubtfully*, as to our Covenants casting the Argument on that Side of the present Controversy which he has espoused: But a Dissent from a Judicatory would need to be upon some better than a *doubtful* Ground. Whether

Whether or not our *Covenants* favour the Principles Mr. *Nairn* is now espousing, is a Question that must be farther spoke to: But, as he afterwards resumes this Matter more expressly, the Consideration of it shall be presently referred. Only it appears that his *Dissent* is yet *unreasonable*.

R E A S O N IV.

‘ These old Dissenters, as must be admitted by all that know
 ‘ them and their Principles, are good Men, and true Presbyteri-
 ‘ ans, adhering tenaciously to the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline
 ‘ and Government of the Church, as established by the Refor-
 ‘ mation in *Scotland*, and the many Laws thereupon enacted
 ‘ establishing the same, and to which our worthy Ancestors
 ‘ bound themselves by the most solemn Oaths and Covenants,
 ‘ which they took, and which some of them sealed with their
 ‘ Blood.’

A N S W E R.

As the *Encomium* Mr. *Nairn* here gives to these whom he calls old Dissenters, is quite foreign to the *present* Purpose, so the *Presbytery* is no way concerned with it. There is no Argument here, but in Defence of the *Persons* of certain People, whose *Persons* the *Presbytery* did never attack; and so this whole Paragraph is quite *impertinent*. Let the *Worth* and *Merit* of any *Persons* be ever so remarkable, what says this for vindicating any *Extremes* they run into? To make a Noise in this Case about any body’s *Worth* or *Goodness*, is at best but an *unfair* Way of disputing. And hitherto the *Dissent* is *groundless*.

R E A S O N V.

‘ That as, by many fundamental Laws, the true Religion,
 ‘ established among us, and our Kings, by their Coronation-
 ‘ oath, are bound to swear to serve God according to his holy
 ‘ Word, and maintain the true Religion of Christ, and rule ac-
 ‘ cording to the Laws of the Realm, and to abolish all false Re-
 ‘ ligion: So, by our Covenants, we are solemnly bound, to
 ‘ endeavour not only the Preservation of the Reformed Religion
 ‘ in the Church of *Scotland*, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline
 ‘ and Government, according to the Word of God; and to en-
 ‘ deavour to bring the Churches of God in the three Kingdoms
 ‘ to the nearest Conjunction and Uniformity in Religion, Con-
 ‘ fession of Faith, Form of Church-Government, Directory for
 ‘ Worship; and, without Respect of Persons, to endeavour the
 ‘ Extirpation of Popery and Prelacy, Superstition, Heresy,
 ‘ Schism, and Profaneness.

‘ That

That, notwithstanding thereof, by the Articles of Union, as Presbytery is established in *Scotland* by an Act of our *Scots* Parliament; so in the 7th Act, anno 1707, ratifying the Treaty of Union of the two Kingdoms, it is declared, That the Parliament of England may provide for the Security of the Church of England, to take place within the Bounds of the Kingdom of England; and all the Successors to the British Crown are obliged to swear, That they shall inviolably maintain and preserve the Settlement of the true Protestant Religion, with the Government, Worship, Discipline, Rights and Privileges of this Church, as established by the Laws of this Kingdom, in Prosecution of the Claim of Right; and at the same time to swear, to maintain and preserve inviolably the Settlement of the Church of England, and the Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline thereof, as by Law established, within the Kingdom of England and Ireland.

Now, it seems inconsistent with our prior Obligation by the Covenants, to endeavour the Reformation of *England* and *Ireland*, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, according to the Word of God, and the extirpating of Prelacy there; and that the Settlement of the Church of *England*, and the Episcopal Government, should be inviolably maintained there.

And as our Kings are, by our antient and fundamental Laws, and by the Covenants (which bind our Kings, Nobles, and Commons) obliged, not only to profess, and to preserve the Reformed Religion of the Church of *Scotland*; but also to reform *England* and *Ireland* from Prelacy and Superstition: So it is absurd, and inconsistent therewith, that our Kings may not only be of the Religion of the Church of *England*, but are expressly obliged to swear to maintain inviolably in *England* Prelacy, and the Superstition of the *English* Church.

The Scruple therefore which the old Dissenters had in acknowledging the late King *George*, and swearing Allegiance to him, does not want its Difficulty, namely, That as they had sworn to, and were bound by our solemn Covenants, to endeavour the reforming of *England* from Prelacy and Superstition, it was inconsistent for them to swear Allegiance to a King, who not only did not possess the Qualifications required by Law, but also had sworn to maintain and inviolably preserve Prelacy, and the whole Establishment of the *English* Church, in its Doctrine, Discipline and Government, in *England*.

From this it would appear, that 'tis inconsistent, when we are to renew the Covenants, that we should consider ourselves as under an Obligation to obey any POWER, that is obliged to preserve

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‘ preserve and maintain Prelacy in *England*, and who, if we shall
‘ swear Allegiance to that Power, may require our Assistance
‘ to maintain Prelacy in *England*, which, by prior solemn Oaths
‘ and Engagements, we are obliged to extirpate, even in *Eng-*
‘ *land*, by reforming them in Doctrine, Discipline and Govern-
‘ ment, according to the Word of God, to which the Prelacy
‘ and Superstition of the *English* Church is most repugnant.’

A N S W E R.

As these are precisely Mr. *Nairn*’s own Words, any *Gram-*
matical Escapes therein the *Presbytery* take not upon them to
correct.

Neither can the *Presbytery* take these *six Paragraphs* altoge-
ther under a separate Consideration, as they all belong to *one* Rea-
son of Dissent.

In the first two Paragraphs Mr. *Nairn* lays down some *Prem-*
isses, and, in the other four, he draws some *Conclusions* from
them; all which must be considered.

I. To begin with the *Premisses*: Anent what Mr. *Nairn* ex-
presses in the first Paragraph, the *Presbytery* are of the same mind
with him, having never given any Ground to *suspect* the contra-
ry. What is expressed in the second Paragraph, the *Presbytery*
doth also acknowledge; nor have they ever endeavoured to *palli-*
ate or *extenuate* the grievous Defections therein mentioned, from
the fundamental Laws and Articles of the Civil Constitution in
our *reforming* Periods.

II. The *Conclusions* Mr. *Nairn* draws from these *Premisses*,
whereanent the *Presbytery* and he do not differ, come next to
be considered.

As what he advances, in this *fifth* Reason of Dissent, is versant
about the *Presbytery*’s Principle anent the present Civil Magi-
strate, and his Dissent from them in the Matter of *that* Prin-
ciple; so the Rules of Reasoning require, that his *Conclusions*
should strike directly against their *said* Principle, and therefore
should amount precisely unto *this much*, viz. That they are
wrong in acknowledging the present Civil Authority over these
Nations, and Subjection thereunto in *lawful Commands*. This
is the true Point of Controversy betwixt Mr. *Nairn* and the *Pres-*
bytery. *Whatever* he infer anent the present Civil Magistrate, if
he infer not *this*, his present Reasoning against the *Presbytery* is
quite from the *Purpose*: And, if he infer it not, upon just Grounds,
this whole Reasoning can have no manner of *Force* in the present
Case. How then this Matter stands, will appear in considering
the several *Conclusions* Mr. *Nairn* draws from the *Premisses* he
has laid down.

I. His

1. His *first* Conclusion is in the *third* Paragraph, where he mentions *two* things as *inconsistent*. (1.) That we are *obliged*, by our Covenants, to endeavour the *Reformation* of *England* and *Ireland*, &c. (2.) That the Settlement of the Church of *England*, and the *Episcopal Government*, should be inviolably *maintained* there. Hereunto it is answered, that,

(1.) It can scarce be thought Mr. *Nairn* here means, That the Settlement of the Church of *England*, and the *Episcopal Government* there, being *in Fact* maintained by the *present Powers*, is *inconsistent* with the *Obligation* this *Presbytery* is under, by our Covenants, to endeavour the *Reformation* of *England* and *Ireland*: For nothing could be more absurd, than to suppose, that any *Difficulties* in the Way of this *Endeavour* can be *inconsistent* with our *Obligation* thereunto.

(2.) If Mr. *Nairn* means, That it is *inconsistent* for the *same* Person or Persons to be under the *foresaid* *Obligation* of our Covenants, and, at the *same* Time, to engage to the *foresaid* *Maintenance* of the Settlement of the *English* Church and *Episcopal Government*: This is indeed altogether undeniable. But what then? Does the *Presbytery* come under any Engagement to *maintain* the *English* Church and *Episcopal Government*? Does their Principle anent the Civil Magistrate, which Mr. *Nairn* is quarrelling, lay them under any Engagement *that* Way? Their Principle is, That they ought to acknowledge the present Civil Authority in *lawful Commands*, and to submit thereunto in *these* Circumstances. Does this say, that they engage themselves to concur with the Civil Magistrate, in maintaining the *Hierarchy* and *Superstitions* of the *English* Church; while yet they openly deny the *Lawfulness* thereof, and, according to the *Obligation* of our Covenants, do openly testify against the Conduct of the present Magistrate in *that* Matter. It is strange to infer, because the *Presbytery* acknowledge *lawful Commands*, that therefore they are for acknowledging *unlawful* ones; which yet is the most that what Mr. *Nairn* here says can amount to: And therefore his *Dissent* is hitherto quite *groundless*.

2. Mr. *Nairn's* *second* Conclusion is in the *fourth* Paragraph; and it amounts to no more than this, That the *Obligations* our Kings were brought under, by fundamental Laws and Articles of the Civil Constitution, in our *reforming* Periods, and those they ly under by the *present* Constitution, relative to *Religion* and our Covenants, are *inconsistent*; and that an Acknowledgment of *both* these is *absurd*. Now, this is what the *Presbytery* never denied, but have taught as plainly as Mr. *Nairn*; so that they never gave him occasion to argue this Point with them. But what is this to the *present Purpose*? The Question still remains, Whe-

ther or not, notwithstanding all *these Evils* that our Magistrates are chargeable with, yet their Authority may be still acknowledged, and subjected unto in *lawful Commands*? Or, Whether such Acknowledgment of, and Subjection to their Authority, be *inconsistent* with a due Testimony against the *above Evils*, while the *Presbytery* agree with Mr. *Nairn*, in reckoning it their Duty to carry on a due Testimony against *all these*? This Point Mr. *Nairn* has still left *untouch'd*, and so his *Dissent* is still quite *groundless*.

3. His *third Conclusion* is in the *fifth Paragraph*: And therein the Plea is carried on, not *immediately* in favour of any Point of *Truth* or *Duty*, but in favour of these he calls *old Dissenters*; as expressing an *Inconsistency* they saw in the way of acknowledging the late King *George*. In so far as this Paragraph is a Plea for these *Persons*, it is impertinent to the Case in hand, and the *Presbytery* have no Business with it: They have nothing ado here, but to notice what may be applicable to the Controversy betwixt Mr. *Nairn* and them: Wherefore it is sufficient to observe, that,

(1.) Any Question, as to *swearing Allegiance* to a King, has no Concern with the *present Case*; the *Presbytery* not having had this in View, as is declared in *Answer 3. to Reason III.*

(2.) The whole Amount of this Paragraph, as to the *present Case*, is *no more*, than that Obedience to a King, who not only doth not possess the Qualifications required by Law, (*viz.* during *Reformation*) but also hath sworn to maintain and inviolably preserve Prelacy, and the whole Establishment of the *English Church*, in its Doctrine, Discipline and Government in *England*; that Obedience to such a King is *inconsistent* with our Covenant-obligations. And this indeed is the true Point in Debate, if the said Obedience be still understood in the *Presbytery's* Sense, *viz.* with relation only to *lawful Commands*. But, as to this Point, Mr. *Nairn* doth at most only *affirm*, without advancing any *Reason* for his Side of the Controversy: And so, for any thing he has said, his *Dissent* is still quite *unreasonable*.

4. His *fourth Conclusion* is in the *sixth Paragraph*. Here it is that his Gradation of *Inferences*, upon this *fifth Reason*, is brought to a Period; and here does he at last *appear* to bring all home to the Case in hand, though, upon a little Enquiry, there will be found only an *Appearance* of doing so. Upon this Paragraph it is to be remarked, that,

(1.) When Mr. *Nairn* there brings in the *Presbytery's* Declaration of their Principle anent the Civil Magistrate, in Opposition to *his* Scheme, as standing in a Connexion with their *Renovation* of the Covenants, he is still persevering in a Mistake, formerly noticed in *Answer 2. to Reason II.* For he still takes the

the Continuance of the debated Paragraph, in the Confession of Sins, for granted, and dissents therefrom, though it was a Matter then under Consideration, and afterwards dropt.

(2.) He is also persevering in another gross Mistake, viz. That the Presbytery had any View of swearing Allegiance to the King. Upon this see Answer 3. to Reason III.

(3.) There is an Assertion in this Paragraph extremely unaccountable, when applied to the Matter truly in Debate; as then it can amount to nothing less than this, viz. That our Subjection and Obedience to the present Government, in their lawful Commands, lays us open to their requiring our Assistance to maintain Prelacy in England; or implies Subjection and Obedience to such a Demand, were it made. Strange Inference! Can practical Subjection and Obedience to the present Government, in lawful Commands (the maintaining of which is all the Ground that ever Mr. Nairn had to ascribe unto this Presbytery any View of swearing Allegiance?) Can this invite the Government to lay unlawful Commands upon us? Can this imply Subjection and Obedience to such Commands? Could our Lord's paying Tribute to Caesar, imply any Approbation of, or Concurrence with his Idolatry? The Absurdity of such Reasoning must stare every observing Reader in the face.

(4.) What Mr. Nairn farther expresses here, arent the Question in Debate, is the same, upon the Matter, with what was noticed as implied in the last Paragraph, viz. That the considering ourselves as under an Obligation to obey any Power, that is obliged to preserve and maintain Prelacy in England, is inconsistent with our prior solemn Oaths and Engagements to extirpate Prelacy even in England. Now (if the Obligation to obey the present Power, be understood only with reference to lawful Commands, which is all the Presbytery contends for; then) as was noticed before, this is indeed the true Point in Debate betwixt Mr. Nairn and the Presbytery. But then, what more doth he still than affirm it? Doth he produce any one Reason for it?

Let the Substance of all that he hath said in thir six Paragraphs, concerning the Point in hand, be drawn up into the Form of an Argument, and then it will easily appear, whether, in the whole, he has advanced any one Reason for supporting his present Principle and Dissent.

When what he advances against the Presbytery in these Paragraphs, is summed up into the Form of an Argument, the major Proposition will be to this Effect.

‘ Though, by our ancient and fundamental Laws, and by the Covenants, our Kings are obliged, not only to profess and preserve the Reformed Religion of the Church of Scotland, but

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also to reform *England* and *Ireland* from Prelacy and Superstition: Yet, by the present Constitution, our Kings not only may be of the Religion of the Church of *England*, but are expressly obliged to swear, to maintain and preserve inviolably the Settlement of the Church of *England*, and the Doctrine, Worship and Discipline thereof, as by Law established, within the Kingdoms of *England* and *Ireland*."

Again, the *minor* Proposition will be to *this* Purpose.

"But we are bound, by our solemn Covenants, to endeavour the Reforming of *England* and *Ireland*, from Prelacy and Superstition."

Now what is the *true Consequence*, that, by any Rules of Reasoning, can follow from *these Premisses*? Can it be any thing but to *this* effect, viz.

"Therefore we ought not, in the least, to concur with our Kings, in their *foresaid* Defection; but, on the contrary, to testify against the same in all habile Ways, and, notwithstanding thereof, to endeavour the Fulfilment of our *Covenant-obligation*, to reform *England* and *Ireland* from Prelacy and Superstition."

This is a *Consequence* which the *Presbytery* acknowledges as fully as Mr. *Nairn* can do: And it may be appealed to all the World, if *any other* can be lawfully deduced from the foregoing *Premisses*. But the *Consequence* Mr. *Nairn* draws is quite different, being to *this* effect, viz.

"Therefore, we should not consider ourselves as under an Obligation to obey the present Power: That is, (according to the Debate betwixt the *Presbytery* and him) we ought not to consider ourselves as under an Obligation to obey the *lawful* Commands of the present Power.

In order to evince the *Unlawfulness* of obeying even the *lawful* Commands of the present Power, it is not enough to declare, that he is chargeable with Corruption and Apostasy in *so* many Instances: All that follows from this is, that we ought not to concur with, but to testify against the said Apostasy and Corruption. But Mr. *Nairn* ought to have manifested, that, through these Evils, the present Power has actually *forfeited* his Office, and that thereby a *Subject* is actually loosed from any *Relation* unto him as *such*, even while he is actually reigning by the *Consent* of the *Nation*. This is the *only* Argument that can prove, or make any *Appearance* of proving the *Unlawfulness* of obeying even the *lawful* Commands of the present Magistrate. But, as Mr. *Nairn* ventures not upon any Argument of *this* Nature, what else he advances strikes only against *Concurrence* with the *Corruptions* of the Magistrate, but has no manner of Relation

to the *Principle* he has espoused against the *Presbytery*, viz. That the present Civil *Authority*, and Subjection thereunto in *lawful* Commands, is not to be acknowledged. This then is a *Principle*, which hitherto he hath *only asserted*; and the *Presbytery* must delay to open up the *Unreasonableness* of this Assertion, till it appear whether he afterwards produces any *Reason* for it. It is enough, at present, to observe, that as hitherto he has attacked their *Principle* only by *bare Assertion*; therefore his *Dis- sent* upon that Head is yet quite *unreasonable*.

R E A S O N - VI.

‘ As the Covenants ought to be renewed in the Words they were conceived by our Ancestors, so far as is suited to our Circumstances, so if these Words in the Covenant, viz. *To preserve and defend the King’s Majesty’s Person and Authority, in the Preservation and Defence of the true Religion*; be applied to the present Sovereign, it cannot be expressed indefinitely, because he has sworn to maintain a prelati- cal or false Religion in *England*, which we, by the solemn League, are obliged to extirpate, and reform *England* from it: And therefore there is a Necessity, that, at renewing the Covenants, the same must be done with an Alteration suited to our present Circumstances, that we may not involve ourselves in Contradictions and Perjury. Neither can we, in Consistency with our Obligation to reform *England*, engage to preserve the Rights and Privileges of the Parliament, because it stands upon the Footing of the UNION, which allows the Settlement of the *English* Church to continue, without any Alteration of the Liturgy, Rites, Ceremonies, Discipline, and Government of the Church, as by Law established in *England* at the UNION, which is to remain in full Force for ever.’

A N S W E R.

1. What the *Presbytery* has been aiming at, is a Renewing of the Covenants, in a Way suited to our Circumstances; and that with as much Regard to the Words wherein they were conceived by our Ancestors, as Reason, Providence and Religion will admit of. If Mr. *Nairn* be for paying any more Regard to these Words, besides several Absurdities, there will be *Idolatry* in his Case.

2. Upon this *abstruse* and *self-inconsistent* Paragraph, it is not worth while to remark farther, than that if, by what is here said, Mr. *Nairn* means, that the *Presbytery* cannot renew the Covenant-Oath of *Allegiance* to the present Government; this
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is what they *grant*, because it is not competent for them to *impose* Oaths in *Civil Matters*, though, if the Civil Government, in a Way of supporting Reformation, were again imposing the *same Allegiance*, they would have Abundance of *Freedom* to take it. But, if Mr. *Nairn* here means, that the Principle which the *Presbytery* now maintains anent Subjection to the present Civil Authority in lawful Commands, is any way *inconsistent* with our *Covenant-Allegiance*: This is what the *Presbytery* altogether *refuses*; and their Grounds for so doing may be afterwards laid open.

3. As to the Clause in the Solemn League which binds, *mutually, to preserve the Rights and Privileges of the Parliaments*, common Sense tells, that this Clause can bind only in so far as Providence gives *Occasion* for it. A Parliament in *Scotland* we have not: And, as to the *British* Parliament, which is a Part of the present Legislative Power, the *Presbytery* contend not, that the Covenant lays them under any Obligation with Reference thereunto, or that they have any Concern therewith, but what is expressed in the Principle which they hold in opposition to Mr. *Nairn*, *viz.* That we should acknowledge the present Civil Authority over these Nations, and Subjection thereunto in *lawful* Commands. Therefore,

4. The whole Amount of this Paragraph, as to the Point in *Debate* betwixt Mr. *Nairn* and the *Presbytery*, is just a Repetition of what he has said before, *viz.* That Acknowledgment of, and Subjection unto the present Civil Government, in *lawful* Commands, amidst the Corruption and Apostasy thereof, is *inconsistent* with our Covenant-Obligation, to reform *England*. But this is a Point which the *Presbytery* *denies*, and Mr. *Nairn* still only *asserts* it, without advancing any one *Reason* for it: And therefore his *Dissent* is still quite *unreasonable*.

R E A S O N VII.

As the said Dissenters are known, according to their Principles, to be against Popery, they can never favour the *Pretender*, or his Interest: Nor is their Doctrine inconsistent with the Confession of Faith, in the 4th Article of the 23d Chapter, which bears, *That Infidelity, or Difference in Religion, does not make void the Magistrate's just and legal Authority*: For that is to be understood of a Land *not reform'd*, where some, that profess the true Religion, may have their Lot and Residence: But, where true Religion is once made a part of our Civil Constitution, and certain religious Qualifications in these who are to be our Kings, are settled and made

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‘ necessary, by fundamental Laws and solemn Covenants, that
 ‘ bind both King and People; there the Obligation upon the
 ‘ King, to profess and preserve our true Religion, is as binding
 ‘ upon him, as the Obligation, to submit to his legal Authority,
 ‘ is binding upon the People.’

A N S W E R.

1. Here Mr. *Nairn* returns to harp upon his *leading String*, in celebrating the old Dissenters; though this be a Matter quite foreign to any Business ever he had ado with the *Presbytery*, or they with him.

2. For reconciling the Principle Mr. *Nairn* has now espoused, with the 4th Article of the 23d Chapter of the *Confession of Faith*, he scruples not even to say, *That that is to be understood of a Land not reformed, where some, that profess the true Religion, may have their Lot and Residence.* This is indeed a Piece of intolerable Freedom which Mr. *Nairn* uses with Truth, Reason, our *Confession of Faith*, and the Candour of our Reformers: And it gives a melancholy Evidence of what awful Shifts one may take, for the Support of a favourite Error. The Shift Mr. *Nairn* here uses, is what the *Presbytery* will afterwards have occasion to expose, and thereby to vindicate our *Confession of Faith*, as what is here asserted not only recedes from it, but is subversive of it. However, it is enough at present to observe, that here he comes in with a bare-fac'd Assertion, without producing even the least Appearance of Reason for it; but blunt Assertion can be no Reason of Dissent.

3. Mr. *Nairn* here plainly teaches, that true Religion has been made a Part of our Civil Constitution. As to which it must be observed, That although the *Presbytery* acknowledge, that the Profession, Defence and Maintenance of the true Religion, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Presbyterial Church-Government, agreeable unto, and founded upon the Word of God, was secured by the fundamental Constitution of the Civil Government in our reforming Periods; which Deed of Constitution, in all moral Respects, is morally unalterable, because of its Agreeableness to the Divine Will revealed in the Word, and because it was attained to, and fixed, in pursuance of our solemn Covenants: Yet the *Presbytery* maintain it as a Principle founded on the Word of God, and agreeable to the Confessions of all the reformed Churches, that as the Defection of a Nation from attain'd to Reformation doth not deprive them of a Right to choose Civil Magistrates for themselves, and that as Subjection to them, and Obedience to their lawful Commands continues ob-

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Duty incumbent upon the *Minority*, who adhere to the covenanted Reformation; so also, that these *Civil Rights* of the Nation, and their Magistrates, did neither *arise* from, nor were *innovated* by the Reformation once attain'd to. But this Principle is plainly disown'd by Mr. *Nairn*, while he teaches that Religion has been made a *Part* of the *Civil Constitution*, which *mingles* and *blends* Church and State together. True Religion is not only the Church's Blessing, but her very *Substance*; so that true Religion and a true Church cannot be *divided*: Now, if true Religion became a *Part* of the *Civil Constitution*, it inevitably follows, that the Church became a *part* of the *State*; which Doctrine, as it is absurd in itself, so it lays a plain Foundation for *Erastianism*, overturning the *Distinction* betwixt the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus and the Kingdoms of this World. Moreover, if the true Religion (which is spiritual and supernatural) became a *part* of the *Civil Constitution*, then it could no longer remain a *Civil*, but became a *religious*, a *spiritual*, a *supernatural* Constitution. What then Mr. *Nairn* here asserts, is just a *Bundle* of Absurdity: But bare *Assertion* and *Absurdity* can be no *Reason* of *Dissent*.

4. He farther speaks of certain *religious* Qualifications being made *necessary* in our Kings. If he means a Necessity of religious Qualifications, for the *Well-being* of their Administration, and a Necessity that the Politick Body should look out for these, in the *Choice* of a King; then the *Presbytery* agree with him: And this is what, by our fundamental Laws, was established. But, if he means a Necessity of these religious Qualifications, unto the very *Being* of the Regal Office, herein indeed they are obliged to *differ*. For, if any Qualifications of *revealed* Religion (which Mr. *Nairn* must mean, otherways he speaks not intelligibly) be necessary unto the very *Being* of the King's Office, this just coincides with what was formerly said, as to the true Religion being a *Part* of the *Civil Constitution*; and it lays a farther Foundation for *Erastianism*: For what more can be asserted of a *Church Officer*, than that religious Qualifications are necessary to the *Being* of his Office?

What then Mr. *Nairn* here asserts to have been done by our fundamental Laws, is what no human Laws whatsoever *can* or *ought* to do. No human Laws can alter the true *Distinction* of the State from the Church, or the true *Nature* of Magistracy, as established by the eternal and *unalterable* Law of God: And, accordingly, the Interpretation that Mr. *Nairn* here makes of our fundamental Laws, in reforming Times, is not only quite *perverse*, but *inconsistent* with the Nature of Things.

5. In the *Close* of the Paragraph under Consideration, there

is a Comparison instituted betwixt the Obligation upon the King to *profess* and *preserve* the true Religion, and the Obligation upon the People to *submit* to his legal Authority; that the former is *as binding* as the latter.

This Comparison, as Mr. *Nairn* brings it in, has no Sense in it, unless he mean, that the King's not fulfilling *his* Obligation, looses the People from *theirs*. And

If he means, that, upon the King's not fulfilling his Obligations, and refusing to be reformed, the People, *collectively* considered, or as a *politick Body*, are warranted to lay him aside; this is indeed a Principle inseparable from the true Doctrine of Liberty. But what then? All this has no Relation to the Dispute betwixt Mr. *Nairn* and the *Presbytery*. The People, *collectively* considered, in a *politick Body*, are not in a State of Subjection: It is evident that *Superiority* must, in the Order of Nature, be *before Subjection*, the King *before* the *Subjects*; but the *politick Body* is, in the Order of Nature, *before* the King, giving Rise to the King, and so cannot be *subject* unto him. The *politick Body*, therefore, is a *Party voluntarily contracting* with the King; and their continu'd Concern with him, is anent the *Observation* of a *Contract*, not anent the *yielding* of *Subjection*: And the Consequence is, that any Argument anent the Obligations or Rights of the People, *collectively* considered, as a *politick Body*, never touches the Question anent the Duties or Rights of the People, *separately* considered, as *Subjects*. There can be no *Inference* of the one from the other, as they are Cases entirely *distinct*.

If Mr. *Nairn* means, that the King's not fulfilling *his* Obligations, as to the true Religion, looses the People, *separately* considered, as *Subjects*, from *their* Relation to him, and from an Obligation to obey his *lawful* Commands; this is impossible, without supposing that Christian Qualifications are essential to the *Being* of the Kingly Office; which is an absurd and *Erastian* Position, that has been already expos'd.

Thus, upon the whole, it appears, that, in this *seventh* Reason of Dissent, Mr. *Nairn* advances nothing for his Principle, in opposition to the *Presbytery*, but bare and absurd *Affertions*: Wherefore his *Dissent* is still quite *unreasonable*.

R E A S O N V I I I .

There is another Reflection cast upon some of the Dissenters, That they are for propagating Religion by offensive Arms; which, I apprehend, is without any Foundation: For in none of the Writings of the old Dissenters, or any others, do they contend for a Power to propagate Religion by

‘ offensive Arms: All they ever pled for, was a Liberty for defending themselves, and one another, in the Enjoyment of the true Religion; nor have they any Expression, as I apprehend, even to that purpose, stronger than these used in our Covenants, namely, *To endeavour with their Estates and Lives, mutually, to preserve their Rights and Liberties; and, for that End, to assist and defend one another.*’

A N S W E R.

What Mr. *Nairn* here advances, is in opposition to the *latter Part* of the latter Clause of the *Paragraph*, from which the Dissent is made. And here it is needful only to observe, That,

1. This Clause, in the Overture, did not say, That some were for *propagating Religion by offensive Arms*; but that they were *espousing Principles in favours of propagating Religion by offensive Arms*; Principles that *natively run that Way*, and amount to *that much*, though the Persons should not chuse to express them in *that Manner*.

2. Mr. *Nairn* doth not profess to espouse these Principles, and so gives no occasion to dispute with him thereanent: But it is exceeding strange he should deny that *some few* are chargeable with them. Will it believe with any body, that Mr. *Nairn* never heard tell of the Scheme which hath been well known by the Name of the *Active Testimony*? And is it not well enough known, that this active Testimony teacheth that a *smaller Number* may endeavour to bring about *National Reformation*, by *Force*, in opposition to the *Body* of the Nation? What is this, but to propagate Religion by *offensive Arms*? But, moreover, has not Mr. *Nairn* been *particularly* acquainted with a Representation given in to this *Presbytery* (when he was a Member of it) by one whom they afterwards *excommunicated*: In which Representation the Author openly mainrains, That it is the Duty of these in a State of Secession from the established Church, to *revolt* from the *present Civil Government*, and to set up a *new Civil Government* in the Land, and to support the *new Magistrates*, in putting the Laws of God, and (what he calls) the Covenanted Laws of the Land in *Execution legally and formally against all the Opposers and Impugners thereof*. Is not *this* a teaching to propagate Religion by *offensive Arms*? And can Mr. *Nairn* be ignorant, that this Man was not *alone* in his Scheme?

After all, it is most surprizing to find Mr. *Nairn* asserting, that all that these People ever pled for, was Liberty of *defending*, &c. How far he himself believes what he here asserts, *sibi constat*.

constet. It can be proven that he is *not* ignorant of the above Principles maintained by *some*; and, as he picks no Quarrel with their Principles, all that he says here can then amount only to a disowning the *proper Name* which the *Presbytery* gives thereunto: And how *fair* or *ingenuous* this Dealing is, let the World judge. Upon the whole, it appears that this *Denial* which Mr. Nairn brings in for the *last Reason* of his Dissent, is itself surprisingly *unreasonable*; and therefore his *Dissent* is hitherto, and throughout, quite *unreasonable* and *groundless*.

What comes next to be considered, is, the *Dissent itself*, as Mr. Nairn expresses it in the *Close* of his Paper, which is as follows,

‘ Upon these Grounds, I humbly dissent from the above Testimony of the Reverend *Presbytery*, as far as it is intended as a Reflection upon the old Dissenters, and some few others, as the Reverend *Presbytery* design them; and craves the Dissent be recorded with the above Reasons thereof.’

(*Sic subscribitur*) THO. NAIRN.

This is indeed a Dissent *suitable* to the Reasons of it, being every way as *extravagant* as they. For here it is remarkable, that,

1. Mr. Nairn dissents from the debated *Paragraph* in the Overture anent renewing the *Covenants*, not *absolutely*, but in some respects, *as far as*, &c.

2. According to the plain Meaning of his Words, he dissents not from that *Paragraph* as it lies in *itself*, and according to the *actual Tendency* it has in itself; but as (*passively*) it is *intended*: That is to say, he dissents from it only according to the *Intention* of the *Presbytery* therein; where he goes quite away from the *Paragraph* itself, and dips into the *Minds* of the *Presbytery*, dissenting not from the *Intention* of *their Words*, but from the *Intention* of *their Hearts*, which is a Stroke both *bold* and *ridiculous*.

3. He dissents from it, not as if it were intended as a Reflection upon any Point of *Truth* or *Duty*, a Dishonour unto *Jesus Christ*, or an Injury unto his *Cause*, but *as far as it is intended as a Reflection upon the old Dissenters, and some few others*. And here indeed Mr. Nairn seems wholly to lay aside the *Mask*, and to make it entirely evident, that in this whole Matter he is *properly* taking up the Cause of so many *Persons*, instead of the Cause and Defence of *Truth*. And it is lamentable, that this whole Appearance he has made, comes to an Issue so *mean* and *ridiculous*; while, after all, he dissents from the debated *Paragraph*, only *as far as it is intended as a Reflection upon the old Dissenters, and some few others*; though he had never the least

Ground given so much as to *suspect*, that ever the *Presbytery*, or any Member thereof, had any such *Intention*.

A Progress hath now been made through Mr. *Nairn's* whole Paper of *Dissent*; so that the *Reasons* advanced for the same have been severally *answered*. But, before going further, it may be proper to *resume* and give a brief View of the whole Matter, which has been under particular Consideration; and the Case is plainly as follows.

In the *Overture* anent renewing the *Covenants*, there was a *Paragraph* insert, *confessing* the *national Apostacy*, particularly of our *Rulers*, as a great Provocation; and also mentioning, as Ground of *Humiliation*, 'the dangerous Extreme that some have gone into, of impugning the present Civil Authority over these Nations, and Subjection thereunto in *lawful* Commands: ——— And that some few others carry their Zeal against the Defections and Evils of the Times, to the dangerous Extreme of espousing Principles in favours of propagating Religion by *offensive* Arms.' As is more fully expressed in the *Paragraph* itself.

At the meeting of *Presbytery* in *Stirling* in *December* last, Mr. *Nairn* gave in a Paper, containing Reasons of *Dissent* from the said *Paragraph*, which he, therein, cites with the *Omission*, particularly of that Clause, which respects the *National Apostacy*, and which might have saved him the Pains of arguing with the *Presbytery* upon that Head.

In that Paper, Mr. *Nairn* is not at the Pains to *distinguish* his Reasons, or to lay them down in any Form of *clear Argument*, or so as to be any way *conclusive* to the Point in hand: But, on the contrary, they are more in *Number*, according to the Form of his Paper, than what they are in *Fact*, and they are expressed in such a *Jumble*, and with such needless Enlargements and Repetition of Purposes, as serves to *darken* the Controversy, to *impose* upon the unwary, and to *seduce* the simple. — And it is very remarkable, that he never so much as alledges the *Presbytery's* Principle, above signified, to be contrary unto any *Article* of our *Confession of Faith*, or any *Text* of *Scripture*; nor does he advance any thing from these Topicks, for proving his Side of the Controversy: But, throughout that Paper, he either produces *bare Assertions*, without alledging any thing for *Proof*; or he goes quite away from the Question, disputing needlessly with the *Presbytery*, in Matters whereanent he and they are agreed, or anent which they never gave him any Ground of *Controversy* with them. And then, his *Dissent* itself goes away from the *avert Meaning* of the debated *Paragraph*, and turns upon a *supposed Intention* of the *Presbytery*, which they never gave anybody
occasion

occasion to *suppose* they had. Thus, at last, his whole Dissent, and the Reasons thereof, complexly taken, make up one *continued Blunder*, and all comes just to *nothing* as to the Case in Hand.

But, more particularly, when Mr. Nairn's Paper is considered, all of it that looks any way to the Case in hand, appears reducible to these *five Heads*.

1. He dissents from the *Presbytery* as *testifying* against, *reflecting* upon, and *stigmatizing* the old Dissenters. But this has been sufficiently answered.

2. He strikes out against the debated *Paragraph*, its standing in the Overture anent renewing the Covenants: But he had no Ground to dissent from the *Presbytery* in *this* Matter, because it was *still* under *Consideration*, as hath been signified.

3. He dissents from what is asserted anent *some few* in the *Close* of the Paragraph, as a *Falshood*: But his *Denial* thereof hath been already manifested to be altogether *groundless* and *unaccountable*.

Any other Grounds of Dissent to be found in his Paper, come, at most, to these two. 1. That Acknowledgment of the present Civil Authority over these Nations, and Subjection thereunto in *lawful* Commands, is *inconsistent* with our Covenant-obligations, and *inconsistent* with a due Testimony against the Corruption of the present Constitution. 2. That the 4th *Article* of the 23d *Chapter* of our *Confession of Faith*, in the Passage cited by him, is to be understood of a Land *not reformed*, where some that profess the true Religion may have their Lot and Residence.

Now, as to *these* two Points, the *Presbytery* have hitherto argued only, that they are *bare Assertions*. Mr. Nairn alledges not any thing at all for the *Proof* of them; and *bare Assertions*, even tho' *true*, can be no *Reasons* of Dissent. Before they can *vindicate* a Dissent, *Reasons* for them must be produced; but, as there is nothing of *this* in the Case, what has been said is sufficient for *casting* his *whole* Paper of Dissent.

However, the *Presbytery* inclines also to manifest the *Falshood* of these two Assertions above mentioned; but it will be necessary to delay this, till it be considered what farther Mr. Nairn advances upon the Head, in his *Petition* and Paper of *Secession*.

*ANSWERS by the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY, to
the Representation and Petition, dictated in their
Presence, by Mr. Nairn, to their Clerk, at Edin-
burgh, February 3. 1743.*

IN the *Introduction* it hath been already declared, upon what Occasion Mr. Nairn did, at *Edinburgh, February 3. 1743.* dictate unto the Presbytery clerk a *Representation and Petition*, the *Tenor* whereof follows.

Whereupon Mr. Nairn desired that it may be marked, that he is sorry that he should be obliged to differ in any Point from this Reverend Presbytery, more especially in a Matter of great Consequence; and, were it not that he is straitned in point of Principle and Conscience, he would rather have chused to have been silent. He can solemnly declare, that he doth not contend for contending's sake, but because he considers that the Matter, that hath been under Deliberation, is of the greatest Consequence, and of the very last Importance, *namely*, the Way in which we should go about that solemn and serious Work of renewing our sacred Covenants. He is sorry that this Reverend Presbytery have cast any Reflection upon these worthy Persons called *old Dissenters*, more especially, when that he cannot disown, that he is much of the same Sentiment with them; so what affects them must likewise affect him, which obliged him to enter a Dissent from the Testimony of this Reverend Presbytery: Therefore, and for the Reasons contained in the said Dissent, he humbly begs that they may recognise that Part of their Testimony against these Persons, who maintain these Principles, that the said *old Dissenters* and he aver.

In the next place, with respect to the Way and Method of renewing these Covenants, he earnestly desires that the Reverend Presbytery would farther consider of it; for that the Way proposed by them does not seem to be agreeable unto the Way in which they were taken and sworn in this Land. Being, as they were then conceived, he admits, that, at present, they cannot be taken in these very Words, if, by the King's Majesty and Parliament, is to be understood the present King, and the present Parliament: Therefore he is for renewing them as they stand, with an Exception of some Particulars, where there must be an Alteration of the Phrase: And he cannot think of any other or better Alteration, than solemnly to pronounce, and formally to swear to these Covenants, with the Variations they

‘ they were renewed with at *Auchinshaugh* near *Douglas*, *July*
 ‘ 24th 1712, and, if any other Alterations are necessary, it well
 ‘ deserves the Consideration of this Reverend Presbytery. He has
 ‘ all Freedom thus, as the Lord shall pity, to take these Cove-
 ‘ nants: And he thinks, that if they are not sworn to with such
 ‘ Alterations, suited to our Circumstances, that it cannot be said
 ‘ to be really a renewing, without Diffimulation, these Cove-
 ‘ nants; but, on the contrary, a taking a quite different Oath
 ‘ and Covenant. Mr. *Nairn* likewise declared his Adherence to
 ‘ the Dissent he gave in at *Stirling*, and craved Liberty to eek or
 ‘ add unto what is above marked against the Afternoon.’

A N S W E R.

It is not worth while here, to make any Remarks upon the *liberal* and *solemn Profession* that Mr. *Nairn* makes in the Entry, nor upon the *Manner* wherein he is pleased to express himself anent the Matter under Deliberation. It is observable however, that he *misrepresents* the Case, when he gives out, that the Matter of his contending with the *Presbytery*, is, *the Way in which we should go about that solemn and serious Work of renewing our sacred Covenants*. The *Paragraph*, from which he dissented, was, by this Time, *translated* from the *Overture* anent renewing the Covenants, into a *separate Act*, though here he takes no notice of it. But, moreover, the Matter of his Contention with the *Presbytery* was a *Point of Doctrine*, and an *Article* of our *Confession of Faith*, as hath been already signified.

Mr. *Nairn* also still persists in a *Mistake*, formerly noticed, *viz.* That the *Presbytery* have cast a Reflection upon the *Persons* of some People, called old Dissenters.—But, to proceed, there are two Demands which he makes upon the *Presbytery*, that may be separately spoke to.

1. He humbly begs, ‘ That they may recognise that Part of
 ‘ their Testimony against *these Persons*, who maintain these Prin-
 ‘ ciples that the said old Dissenters and he aver.’

Hereunto it is answered, that,

(1.) The quarrelled *Paragraph* being now taken out of the *Overture*, and ingross’d in a separate *Act* of *Presbytery*, it is the recognoscing of *this Act* (which stands not in Connexion with the Covenants) that Mr. *Nairn* must mean, if he speak *at all* to the Purpose.

(2.) *This Act*, indeed, may more properly by far be denominated a *Testimony*, than the *Paragraph* from which he formerly dissented: But still, it is *formally* a Testimony against *Principles*, and *Principles* that had been drunk in by some few *Acceders* to
 this

this *Presbytery*; and the *Persons* of the old Dissenters the *Presbytery* never had Access to have any *formal* Dealing with.

(3.) Mr. *Nairn* runs too fast, in begging the *Presbytery* to recognise their Act, condemning these Principles, in regard he has hitherto advanced *nothing* in favours of them, except *bare Assertion*. But,

2. 'With respect to the *Way* and *Method* of renewing these Covenants, he earnestly desires, that the Reverend *Presbytery* would farther consider of it.'

Mr. *Nairn* knew very well, that the *Presbytery* were considering upon the *Method* of renewing the Covenants, and that the farther Consideration thereof was what they had in hand. But the Reason he advances for his Demand is, 'That the *Way* proposed by *them* does not seem to be agreeable to the *Way* in which they were taken and sworn in this Land.' From what he afterward says here, and, as is expressed in his Paper of *Secession*, it appears, that the *Disagreement* he quarrels, lies in the *Presbytery's* not renewing the Covenants in a *Repetition* of the same *Form* and *Words* wherein they were formerly conceived. He indeed makes a *Concession*, 'That, at present, they cannot be taken in *these very Words*, if, by the King's Majesty and Parliament is to be understood the *present* King, and the *present* Parliament.' But this is a *Concession* which the *Presbytery* refuses, in so far as it militates against their Principle, in Opposition to Mr. *Nairn*, which he has yet attacked only by *bare Assertion*.

However, the *Method* of renewing the Covenants, which Mr. *Nairn* here insists for, the *Alterations* he proposes, and the *Inference* he makes, in the *Close* of this Petition, if these be not gone into, will natively and necessarily fall in to be spoke to, in considering his Paper of *Secession*; and therefore, to prevent Repetition, this Matter shall be referred thither. In the mean time, it must be observed, that it is very *unreasonable* for Mr. *Nairn* to declare a *general Adherence* here to his former *Dissent*, when the *special* Ground thereof, concerning the Renovation of the Covenants, had been by this Time removed, in his own *Presence*, by the Translation of the quarrell'd *Paragraph* out of the *Overture* anent renewing the Covenants, into a separate Act.

**ANSWERS by the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY,
to Reasons of Dissent and Secession, given in to
the said Presbytery by Mr. Nairn, at Edinburgh,
February 3. 1743.**

THE Occasion, Time, and Manner of Mr. Nairn's giving in his Paper of *Dissent and Secession*, hath been already laid open, in the *Introduction*. The *Preamble* of this Paper must be first considered, and it is as follows.

Whereas this Reverend Presbytery did, at *Edinburgh*, upon the 21st of *October*, emit the following Testimony against the old Dissenters, and some few others, in these Words: *We desire to be humbled for the dangerous Extreme that some have gone into, of impugning the Civil Authority over these Nations, and Subjection thereunto in lawful Commands, on the account of the Want of these Qualifications that Magistrates ought to have by the Word of God and our Covenants, even although they allow us in the free Exercise of our Religion, without Disturbance, and are not manifestly unhinging the Liberties of the Kingdom; an Opinion and Practice contrary to the plain Tenor of Scripture, and to the known Principles of this Church in her Confession and Covenants, and of all other reformed Churches: And that some few others carry their Zeal against the Defections and Evils of the Times, to the dangerous Extreme of espousing Principles in favours of propagating Religion by offensive Arms; quite contrary to that Disposition that ought to be in all the professed Followers of Christ, who came not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them: And for all these things the Lord may justly say, I hearkned and heard, but they spake not aright.* Against which I did enter my Dissent, for the Reasons therein mentioned: And, whereas the Presbytery have now, by their Act, or unanimously approven Overture, homologated their former Testimony against the said Dissenters; laid aside the Civil Part of our Covenants, as unsuitable for them, and declared their Resolution to proceed against me according to the Rules of the Church, for maintaining nothing but Reformation-Principles, as will appear from my foresaid Dissent, and Reasons thereof, compared with their said Overture or Act; I must take the Liberty again to dissent, for the Reasons mentioned in my former Dissent, and these following.

Anent Mr. Nairn's above Citation of the Paragraph from which he formerly dissented, it is to be observed, that,

1. He again omits the *first* Clause thereof; as to which, the

Presbytery refer unto what hath been already laid upon the *Title* of his *Dissent*.

2. As to the latter Part of what is above-cited, viz. 'And for all these Things the Lord may justly say, *I hearkned and heard, but they spake not aright.*' These Words were not a Part of the debated *Paragraph*, but stood in the *Overture* before that *Paragraph* was inserted, and had a general Back-look unto the whole preceeding *Confession of Sins*.

Mr. *Nairn's* saying, that the *Presbytery* have, by their *Act*, laid aside the *Civil Part* of the *Covenants*, as unsuitable for them, will afterwards fall under Consideration: And it is needless to add any thing farther upon this *Preamble*, than in observing, that the *Presbytery* never declared any Resolution to proceed against Mr. *Nairn*, for maintaining nothing but *Reformation-Principles*. It hath been sufficiently manifested already, that he has yet advanced nothing but blunt *Affertion*, in favour of the Principles for which the *Presbytery* resolved to proceed against him, in case he did not retract. He has not yet produced any one Text of Scripture, or any one Article of our *Confession of Faith*, for his Principles, or against the *Presbytery's*: And, 'till he do this, it is too soon to assert so roundly, That the *Presbytery* resolved to proceed against him, for maintaining nothing but *Reformation-Principles*.

The Reasons of *Dissent* and *Secession*, which Mr. *Nairn* now advances, come next to be considered. The Reasons of his former *Dissent*, whereunto he now refers, have been answered already; and these Answers do sufficiently overturn his present *Dissent* and *Secession*, in so far as built upon the fore said Reasons. The Reasons, which he now expresses, are generally two; which shall be severally handled.

REASON I.

1. I cannot agree to the present Form and Manner of renewing the *Covenants*, because 'tis not a taking or swearing to these *Covenants*, as they were originally framed and sworn to by our Ancestors, but really taking a quite different Oath or Covenant, under the Pretence of renewing the old *Covenants*; which is a great Abuse and Imposition upon the People: For the old *Covenants*, which were taken and sworn to, are plainly different from the present Oath that is proposed to be taken, as will appear from reading and comparing them.

The *Preamble* to the present Oath does indeed assert, That we are bound by the *National Covenant*, and *Solemn League*

and Covenant: But then the taking the following Oath is not a renewing these Covenants, but a taking a new Oath or Form of a Covenant, which is not the same with these Covenants; and therefore the taking this Oath, in no Sense, can be called a renewing of the Covenants; which is the Thing proposed, or, at least, what the Associate Presbytery would put upon the People as the former Covenants. In the Solemn League and Covenant, we swear, not only to endeavour the Preservation of the true Reformed Religion, but also to bring the Churches of the three Kingdoms to the nearest Conjunction and Uniformity in Religion, Confession of Faith, Church-Government, &c. And to endeavour the Extirpation of Popery and Prelacy, &c. But this last is altogether omitted in this present Oath or Covenant.

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The general *Scope* of the above *Reason*, is to express Mr. Nairn's Disagreement with the *Form* and *Manner* of renewing the Covenants, proposed by the *Presbytery*; as also with the *Matter* thereof: And these Points must be considered in Order. As to the

1st, The *Ground* he gives for his Disagreement, is, That the *Form* and *Manner* which the *Presbytery* proposes, is not and cannot, in any *Sense*, be called a *Renewing* of the Covenants, but really a taking a quite different Oath or Covenant, under Pretence of renewing the old Covenants. If this were true, Mr. Nairn would indeed have good Ground to differ from the *Presbytery*; and he might well charge them with great *Abuse* and *Imposition* upon the People. But then, what *Reason* doth he produce for that *Alledgeance*? It just comes to this, That the *Presbytery* are for using a new *Form*; they are not for confining themselves to a *Repetition* of the *Form*, or of the same *Words* and *Phrase* wherein the Covenants were conceived by our *Ancestors*: Thus, the Difference which he complains of betwixt the *Form* and *Manner* proposed by the *Presbytery*, and our former Covenants, is such as appears in the *reading* and *comparing* of them; that is, a Difference in *Form*, or in *Words* and *Phrase*. The Use of the same *Form*, or of the same *Words* and *Phrase*, is that only which Mr. Nairn (if his Language here has any *Sense*) admits to be a *Renewing* of our Covenants. This is what he *insists* for; and the doing *otherwise* is that for which he so heavily blames the *Presbytery*.

Now, in Answer unto all this, the *Presbytery* propose to manifest these five Things following: (1.) That the Method of re-

newing the Covenants which Mr. Nairn insists for, against the *Presbytery*, is very *unreasonable*. (2.) That it is quite *absurd* and *impracticable*. (3.) That therein Mr. Nairn is *inconsistent* with *himself*. (4.) That it is quite *unprecedented* in the *Church*. (5.) That the Form and Manner proposed by the *Presbytery*, is really a renewing our solemn Covenants, according to the *Example* of our *Reformers*. And if *these* Things be once made out, the *Presbytery* will be sufficiently *vindicated* against all the Noise Mr. Nairn makes about their pretended *Abuse* and *Imposition* upon People. — It is proposed then to manifest,

I. That the Method of renewing the Covenants, which Mr. Nairn insists for, against the *Presbytery*, is very *unreasonable*. And this it is upon the Accounts following.

1. That we should be *obliged* and *confined* unto a Repetition of the *same Form* or *Words* wherein our Covenants were conceived in the *last* Century, would necessarily require and suppose *one of two* Things: Either,

(1.) That these *Words* (abstracting from the *Meaning* and *Matter*) have a Stamp of *Divine Authority* upon them: But this belongs only unto the Words of the *Holy Ghost* in the *Scriptures*. Yea, the Adherence which Mr. Nairn pleads for, unto the Words of our Covenants, is greater than the Adherence that God requires of us, unto the original *inspired Language* of *Scripture*; for we are warranted to have the *Scriptures* translated into our *own Language*, which is an *Accommodation* of them to the Circumstances of *such* as are ignorant of the original Languages: And, if in retaining the *Meaning*, *Matter*, and *Truths* of *Scripture*, we may clothe the same in *new Words*, that will suit our Circumstances, How *unreasonable* must it be to restrain us from using a *necessary Freedom* with the *Form* or *Words* of our Covenants, for accommodating them to our present Circumstances?

But, on the other Hand,

(2.) Our Confinement unto a Repetition of the *Words* wherein our Covenants were formerly conceived, would suppose that our *first* Covenanters swore an *Adherence*, not only unto the *Things* and *Duties* expressed in our Covenants, but also unto their *own Words* wherein they expressed them; so as the *Oath*, which we ly under in their Loins, should bind us now unto the *Words* as much as unto the *Matter*; or to reckon the *Words* of that Oath, *Part* of the *Matter* of it, whereunto we are *sworn*. But what can appear more ridiculous and *false*, than a Supposition of *this* Kind? Yea, as *that* Oath did not bind *Posterity* unto the *Duties* therein mentioned, any *other* Way than what might suit the Circumstances God should place them in;

How

How then could an Adherence unto the *Words* of that Oath be any farther Requisite? — But

2. That we should be *confined* unto a Repetition of these *Words*, in renewing the *Covenants*, is most *unreasonable*: Because, thus, our *Reformers* were at Liberty to enter into Covenant with God, in a Way suited unto *their* Circumstances, and the *then* special Calls of God's Word and Providence. But we must be denied a *like* Liberty; that is, in covenanting with God, we must *overlook* our *present* Circumstances, and the *present* special Calls of God's Word and Providence, and regard only what was the Case an *hundred Years* ago, in repeating still *that* Form of a Covenant which did quadrate unto *that* Case, but does not quadrate unto *ours*. Again, is the accommodating the *Covenants* to *our* Case a Thing that our *Reformers* could do *for us*, and *save us* the Trouble of, though they were *ignorant* of our Case? Or could what *they* did supersede and annul *our* Duty to deal with God in a Covenant-Way, *sued* unto God's present Calls and Manner of dealing with *us*? Is not then what Mr. *Nairn* insists for most *unreasonable*? Moreover,

II. It is quite *absurd* and *impracticable*.

Here several *Expressions* in our *Covenants* might be mentioned, which can noway *hit* our present *Condition*, and an Application of which unto the same would be very *absurd*: But, passing these, as *obvious* unto an intelligent Reader, it is to be farther remarked, that,

1. The Repetition insisted for is quite *absurd*, because it must, upon the Matter, say, That our *Reformers* did, of *purpose*, calculate the *Form* of their Covenant, not only for the special Circumstances and Calls by Word and Providence which *then* took place, but also for these that should take place even an hundred Years *after*; though yet our *Reformers* neither *foresaw* our present Condition, nor could they, or were they bound to make *Provision* for it.

2. A renewing Covenant, by repeating the ancient *Form*, as Mr. *Nairn* would have it, is quite *impracticable*: For though we should pronounce the *same* Form and Words, yet we behoved necessarily to understand it of the *present* Time, Persons and Things, otherwise it could not be a *present* Oath. But though we should *retain* the Words, if we *mean* them not of the *Time*, *Persons* and *Things*, that our *Forefathers* had ado with; but of *these* which *we* have ado with, then, in *so far*, we pronounce the Words with a *different* Meaning from what our *Forefathers* had: And so this could not be a renewing of the *Covenants* in Mr. *Nairn's* strict Sense, unless he wants a Renovation of *Words*, not of their *Meaning*. Again,

III. In what Mr. Nairn now insists for, he is *inconsistent* with *himself*. For, as his present Language has no Sense, unless he be pleading for a renewing the Covenants, in a *Repetition* of the ancient *Form and Words*; yet, in his *sixth Reason of Dissent*, and in his *Representation and Petition*, he wants the Covenants to be renewed in a Way *sui*ted to our *Circumstances*: And how can these Things *consist*? Moreover, *that Accommodation* of the Covenants to our present *Circumstances*, which he pleads for, must be in *one* or *both* of these two Ways. Either,

1. The *same* Words must be used, but understood of the *present* Time, Persons and Things: And then the Words are used with *another* special View, than what our *Forefathers* had. But is it not fully as lawful to make Use of *other* Words than they, as to use their Words with *another* special View than they had? Again, seeing we must have a special View to the *present* Time, Persons and Things, Is it not far better to express the same in *our own* Words, than to go back an hundred Years, and seek Words for it from our *Forefathers*, who could not *foresee* the same, and who were not bound to suit the Covenants unto our Case, but unto *their own*? Thus, if Mr. Nairn once loose a *Pin* of his Scheme, by allowing us to have our *own Views*, according to our *present* Circumstances, by a Parity of Reason we cannot be hindred from having our *own Words* also. But,

2. By accommodating the Covenants to our present Circumstances, Mr. Nairn may also mean a doing it, 'with an *Exception* of some Particulars, where there must be an *Alteration* of the Phrase.' And this is what he positively advances in his *Petition*. There he proposes an Example of the *Exception* and *Alteration* he is for, *viz.* as in the Renovation of the Covenants at *Auchinshaugh*, near *Douglas*, *July 24th, 1712*. In the printed Copy of the Covenants as *there* renewed, there are some *Alterations* signified upon the *Margin*; and particularly these Places, that respect the *Civil Magistrate*, are explain'd away from *any* Magistrate that *actually is*, and applied to a Magistrate that (perhaps only) *may be*, some Time or other. It is not the *Presbytery's* Business here, to give a Judgment anent the Manner wherein the Covenants were *then* renewed, nor particularly anent the Suitableness of calling the Great GOD solemnly to witness the *Fidelity* of a People unto a Magistrate that had *no Being* in the World. And as to *that* Alteration, which Mr. Nairn has particularly in his Eye anent the *present* Civil Magistrate, it is sufficient, at this Time, to refer to what has been said in *Answer 2. to Reason VI. of his former Dissent*; and to what will occur in *Answer 1. to Reason II. of this Dissent*.

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sent. But what must be farther noticed here, is this, That, in accommodating the Covenants to our Circumstances, Mr. Nairn is for allowing *some Exception and Alteration of the Phrase*. Now here he has fairly broke the Ice; for it is a known Maxim, that *majus & minus non variant speciem*, Degrees of a Thing alter not the Nature of it. And thus, it is the *same* Thing as to the *general Nature* of it, which both *he* and the *Presbytery* here plead for, *viz.* The Renewing of the Covenants with *Alterations suited* to our Circumstances; only *he* is for *one* Manner and Degree of Alteration, and the *Presbytery* for *another*: And how comes *he* to have a Right of prescribing *so many* Alterations as *he* thinks fit, and of crying out, at the same Time, against the *Presbytery*, if *they* offer to use any Freedom of *this Kind*? If Mr. Nairn acted *consistently* with *himself*, in his present Plea against the *Presbytery's* Accommodation of the Covenants to our Circumstances, as if *this* were *no* Renewing of them *at all*, then he should have refused *all* Manner of Alteration: But, while he doth not so, the only Question here then is, Whether *he* or the *Presbytery* shall determine the *Manner and Degree* of Alteration that must be made?

IV. What Mr. Nairn presently insists for, is altogether *unprecedented* in the Church.

For manifesting this, it may be proper, in the *first* place, to take a View of the Practice of the Church of *Israel* in making and *renewing* Covenants. We have several Instances of Covenants of Duties betwixt God and that People, *viz.* at *Horeb*, *Exod.* Chap. xix. In the Land of *Moab*, *Deut.* Chap. xxix. In the Days of *Asa*, *2 Chron.* Chap. xv. In the Days of *Jehoiada*, Chap. xxiii. In the Days of *Hezekiah*, Chap. xxix. In the Days of *Josiah*, Chap. xxxiv. In the Days of *Ezra*, *Ezr.* Chap. x. And in the Days of *Nehemiah*, *Neh.* Chap. ix. and x. Now, we find not *any one* Instance that *Israel*, in renewing Covenant, did, at *any* Time, repeat the *Form* and *Words* of a *former* Covenant; yea, 'tis plain they *never* did: Though we have Instances of their acknowledging and mourning over the *Breach* of former Covenants. Yet will Mr. Nairn venture to say, That *Israel* never renewed their Covenants? or, That, when they entered of *new* into a Covenant, they thereby did *bury, sopite and destroy* former Covenants? This indeed is the *native* Consequence of Mr. Nairn's Scheme.

But, again, let the Practice of the reformed Church of *Scotland* be considered, and it will appear that what Mr. Nairn insists for, is altogether *unprecedented* therein.

In the Years 1580 and 1581, the *Confession of Faith*, or *National Covenant*, was first sworn and subscribed by Persons of

all Ranks. This Covenant was renewed in the Year 1590: And though *then* nine Years only had elapsed after the *first* swearing of that Covenant, yet, for *accommodating* the same to their Circumstances at *that Time*, a general Bond was added thereunto, containing a *distinct* Oath, as to the *Form* and *Words* of it.

Afterwards, in the Year 1638, when our Reformers renewed the *National Covenant*, they saw meet to lay aside the *general Bond* added thereto, and which had been *nationally* sworn and subscribed *Anno* 1590. and they framed and added a *new Bond* or *Oath*, different in *Form* and *Words* from any former. (Which *new Bond*, as the *National Covenant* is printed along with our *Confession of Faith*, begins in the *second* Paragraph after the *Specification* of Acts of Parliament; which Acts *themselves* were however no Part of the *Preamble* to the *new Bond*, far less any Part of that *Oath itself*.) And the said *Bond*, as having the *foresaid* *National Covenant* prefixed to it, was sworn and subscribed by Persons of all Ranks in the Year 1638, and afterwards. Thus, the *National Covenant*, as *first* framed and sworn *Anno* 1580, was not *separately* subscribed *Anno* 1638, but as prefixed unto the *foresaid new Bond*. And why our Reformers did not then also prefix the *Bond* that had been sworn and subscribed *Anno* 1590, there is one Reason declared in a *Protestation* that was read and taken at the *Cross of Edinburgh* by our Covenanters, *September* 22. 1638. And it is thus expressed in the 13th Reason of the *Protestation*, viz. 'The general Bond—containeth many Clauses not so fitting the present Time as that wherein it was subscribed.' But the *National Covenant*, or *Confession of Faith*, did very well fit *that Time*, wherein such Methods were on foot for the Introduction of *Popery*; tho' the Circumstances of *that Time* did require the *new Bond* also to be added.

But it is farther to be observed here, that the *National Covenant*, as it had been sworn *Anno* 1580 and 1590, was no Part of the *Oath* which was sworn *Anno* 1638; it was only Part of the *Preamble* unto that *Oath*. And,

1. This is evident from the *Covenant itself*. For, besides that the *new Bond* is in itself a *complete Oath*, not Part of an *Oath*; it is to be farther observed, that, in *that Part* of the *Preamble* which *immediately* preceeds the *new Bond*, the foregoing *National Covenant*, or *Confession of Faith*, is called the *Confession of Faith* above written, not above sworn, or above subscribed. Again, in the Close of the *Preamble*, they call it the *foresaid National Oath and Subscription*, which the *present and succeeding Generations* in this Land are bound to keep *inviolable*: and thus they speak of it as an *Oath* that *before* had been *nationally* sworn and subscribed, so as it *still* continued *binding*: And they speak

of the *then* present, and succeeding Generations, as bound thereby, in the *same Manner*, that is, that they were *both* bound by it as a Covenant formerly sworn and subscribed, and which was now brought into the *Preamble* of the new Bond. Again,

2. Our Reformers considered and spoke of this new Bond, as a Covenant distinct from the former Covenant (*viz.* in Form and Words, not in the general Matter and Design) and thus they called it *The late Covenant, Our Covenant, Our Confession of Faith and Covenant, &c.* For Evidence of this, the Presbytery refers to a Paper printed at *Aberdeen, Anno 1638*, which is entituled, *Answers of some Brethren of the Ministry, to the Replies of the Ministers and Professors of Divinity in Aberdeen, concerning the late Covenant*: And, in the *Preamble* to the first Answer, when speaking of the old National Covenant, and the new Bond, they call them *our late and preceeding Covenants*. Moreover, the Presbytery refers unto the *Protestation* printed *Anno 1638*, entituled, 'The Protestation of the Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burrows, Ministers and Commons, Subscribers of the Confession of Faith and Covenant, lately renewed within the Kingdom of Scotland; made at the Market-cross of Edinburgh, the 22d of September 1638.' In that *Protestation* there are several Passages to the Purpose in hand; the Presbytery shall name the following. In the *Close* of the 6th Preliminary, speaking of the Bond then framed, they call it *our late Covenant and Confession, descending more specially to the Errors and Novations of the Time*. Again, in the 4th Reason of Protest, they refuse to prefer the general Confession (*viz.* the former National Covenant) unto this, which necessarily was now made more special. And, in the 5th Reason, they call the National Covenant prefixed to their Bond, the former Covenant, and their Bond they call *our Confession of Faith and Covenant*. Again, the Presbytery refers unto a publick Paper, printed *Anno 1638*, which is entituled, *Reasons against the Rendring of our sworn and subscribed Confession of Faith*: And, in Reason 4th, they speak of that late Confession or Covenant, as what was 'according to the laudable Example of our religious Progenitors, who, by the LIKE OATH (*viz.* the former Confession and Covenant) have obliged us to the Substance and Tenor of THIS.'

But, not to multiply Instances, from what has been said it appears, that the Bond which was framed *Anno 1638*, was, in its Form and Words, a new and distinct Confession of Faith and Covenant, and a separate Oath, whereof the former Confession and Covenant was not a Part, but a Part of the *Preamble* thereunto. And this Manner wherein our Reformers, *Anno 1638*, renewed the former Covenant, accomodating it to their Circumstan-

ces, is an exact *Precedent* for the *Manner* of renewing the Covenants, which the Presbytery have in View, as shall be farther noticed. But *what Precedent* is there here for that *Repetition* of the *old Form and Words*, which Mr. Nairn insists for? even *none* at all, but the *contrary*.

It is farther to be observed, that, when the *Solemn League and Covenant* was renewed, *Anno 1648*, as this was but *five Years* after it was *first* sworn and subscribed in *Scotland*; so there had not been any such *Change* of their Circumstances in *that* short Time, as either *required* or *admitted* a laying aside the *first Form* of the *Solemn League and Covenant*; yet, for hitting what was *new* in their Circumstances, they renewed the same with a *solemn Acknowledgment of Sins, and Engagement to Duties*, which was framed at *that* Time. And thus, *still*, Mr. Nairn has no *Precedent* for *his* Way.

Furthermore, as hath been formerly noticed, Mr. Nairn proposes the Renovation of the Covenants at *Auchinshaugh* near *Douglas*, *July 24th 1712*, as a *Precedent* to walk by: But even here he wants a *proper Precedent* for his present Scheme. Mr. Nairn speaks not of following any thing *new* in *that* Example, farther than in an *Exception of some Particulars where there must be an Alteration of the Phrase*; and *that* can only respect the *Notes on the Margin* of the *printed Copy* of the Covenants as *then* renewed. But, *moreover*, when the Covenants were renewed at *that* Time, there was framed a *new Acknowledgment of Sins, and Engagement to Duties*, consisting now of about *six Sheets* of Paper in *small Print*; and the Covenants were *then* sworn and subscribed, *expressly* conform to the *Explication and Application* thereof, in the said *Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties*. And thus Mr. Nairn has *no Precedent* here, *that* will carry him *out* in his present Scheme.

But, the Presbytery proceeds to manifest,

V. That the Form and Manner proposed by *them*, which Mr. Nairn so heavily condemns, is *really* a *Renewing* of our solemn Covenants, according to the *Example* of our Reformers.

I. The Manner which they propose is *really* a *Renewing* of our solemn Covenants. Mr. Nairn indeed makes use of a *popular enough* Argument, when he cries out against the Presbytery as *abusing and imposing* upon the *People* in this Matter. In the Reason of *Dissent and Secession*, now under Consideration, he admits of *nothing* to be a renewing our Covenants, but what consists in *repeating* or saying over again the *ancient Form and Words* thereof: But this indeed is what the Presbytery never *proposed*, what they never had a View of *putting* upon the *People*. However, the *Manner* of renewing the Covenants, which is expres-

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fed in their *Overture* thereanent, is really, and without any the least *Diffimulation*, a *Renewing* of these Covenants, as appears from the following Considerations.

(1.) The Presbytery has not the least *Objection* against the old *Form* of our Covenants, as very suitable unto the *Time* wherein they were framed, they only plead for *Alterations* of the *Form*, suitable unto our *present* Circumstances.

(2.) Once and again, in the *Confession of Sins*, and *Preamble* to the *Bond*, and also in the *Bond itself*, they expressly acknowledge, profess and declare the *perpetual Obligation* of our Covenants, National and Solemn League.

(3.) The Sins mentioned are acknowledged, *not only* as Breaches of the holy Law of God, but *expressly* as Breaches *also* of our Solemn Covenants. Again,

The Duties mentioned are engaged to, *not only* as binding by the Law of God, but *expressly* as binding *also* by the fore said Covenants. Thus the *Title* which the Presbytery gives unto the *Confession* and *Bond* is, 'A solemn Acknowledgment of the publick Sins, and Breaches of the same (*viz.* of our Covenants) and a solemn Engagement unto the Duties contained in them.'

(4.) The Covenants *themselves*, in their ancient *Form* and *Language*, are prefixed to the new *Bond*, as *Part* of the *Preamble* thereunto.

Now, here is a *plain* and *express* Renovation of the whole *Matter* and *Meaning* of our Covenants, in an Accommodation to our Circumstances. And, as our Covenants are to be considered as an *Obligation*, so an *Obligation* cleaves properly to the *Matter* and *Meaning*, not to the *bare Words*: Thus, what the Presbytery proposes is just, in Words suited to our Circumstances, a *solemn avouching*, *not only* an *Obligation* which the Law of God lays upon us, but an *Obligation* laid on us *also* by our Covenants: And this done in an *Oath*, in Words to the *same Purpose*, suited to our Circumstances, is properly a *Renewing* of our Covenants. How then could Mr. Nairn venture to say, That this could, in *no Sense*, be called a *Renewing* of them? What more could he have said, though the Presbytery had framed a *Confession* and *Bond*, bearing *no Relation* to, or *Mention* of our Covenants; and though they were acknowledging Sins, *not* as Breaches of Covenant, and engaging to Duties, *not* as *already binding* by Covenant? But the Case is quite otherways. And so here there is proposed a plain Renovation of our Covenants, in every imaginable *Sense*, excepting that of *confining* ourselves to a *repeating* by *Oath* the *Form* and *Words*, the *Letters* and *Sounds*, wherein our Covenants were expressed an *hundred Years* ago. But this is what the Presbytery have already mani-

feſted to be *unreaſonable, abſurd, impracticable, unprecedented,* and ſo utterly *inconſiſtent* with a Renovation of the Covenants agreeably to our *preſent* Circumſtances, as herein alſo Mr. Nairn is *inconſiſtent* with himſelf. Again,

2. This *Manner* of renewing the Covenants, which the Presbytery propoſes, is according to the *Example* of our Reformers. For, As the *Assembly*, Anno 1648, appointed the Renovation of the *Solemn League*, with a *new Acknowledgment of Sins*, and *Engagement to Duties*; this is juſt what the Pre-bytery propoſes.

Again, as our Reformers, Anno 1638, renewed the National Covenant, by framing a *new Bond*, engaging to *covenanted Duties*, and ſwearing *this Bond* as having the former National Covenant *prefixed* to it; ſo this is juſt what the Presbytery propoſes.

Moreover, for manifeſting yet farther the *exaſt Agreement* betwixt *this Method* of renewing the Covenants, and the Practice of our Reformers at *that Time*,

(1.) The Presbytery refers unto a Paper printed at *Aberdeen*, Anno 1638, entituled, *General Demands concerning the late Covenant*, &c. and unto another Paper, printed at *Aberdeen* the ſame Year, entituled, *Answers, &c. to the Replies of the Miniſters and Profeſſors of Divinity in Aberdeen, concerning the late Covenant*. There we find the Miniſters and Profeſſors of Divinity in *Aberdeen*, objecting againſt the *late Covenant*, or the *new Bond*, that had been ſworn; particularly, That it was *ſubſtantiſtially different* from *that* which was ſubſcribed by the King and his Subjects, *Annis 1580 and 1581*. And, in the *Answer* to the *firſt Demand*, it is replied, That *the ſound Interpretation and Application thereof to the Errors of our Times, can make no ſubſtantiſtial Change*. Again, in *Answer* to the *firſt Reply*, it is obſerved, That *a ſound Interpretation of the Covenant, although proceeding from a private Perſon, and altogether void of external Authority, cannot make a ſubſtantiſtial Difference*. Thus we ſee, our Reformers did not plead that the Covenant, as renewed by them Anno 1638, was the ſame with the former Covenant in *Form and Words*, but that it was *ſubſtantiſtially* the ſame; which is juſt what the Presbytery pleads, in the *preſent Caſe*.

(2.) The Presbytery refers unto a publick Paper formerly cited, entituled, *Reasons againſt the Rendring of our ſworn and ſubſcribed Confeſſion of Faith*. The King preſſed the Covenanters to render, or give up the Covenant or *new Bond* they had ſworn; and in the 4th *Reason* for not rendring it, they obſerve, (as above cited) that *our religious Progenitors, by the like Oath, have obliged us to the SUBSTANCE and TENOR of this*. And ſo the *Bond* framed by the Presbytery is propoſed to be ſworn, as *that* unto the *SUBSTANCE and TENOR* whereof our reli-

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gious Progenitors have obliged us by a like Oath.

(3.) The Presbytery refers unto the publick *Protestation* formerly cited. The King, by a *Proclamation*, Anno 1638. required the *Covenant* to be renewed by all Ranks, in a *Repetition* of the *same Form* and *Words* wherein it had been renewed Anno 1590. Thus, we see that the Debate the Presbytery now has with Mr. Nairn, is not altogether new: Our Reformers had such another Debate with the King, when he made the above *Proclamation*: But they *protested* against the same; and, in the *Reasons* of *Protest*, they express several Things to the Case in hand. Some Passages in that *Protestation*, that cast Light upon the present Case, have been already cited, and shall not be repeated. It may be observed farther, that our Reformers there plead that the *Bond* newly framed and sworn by them, was a necessary *Explication* and *Application* of the former *Covenant* to their Circumstances, that it was *substantially* the same with the former, and but a *Renovation* of the former. Thus, in the 5th Article of *Protest*, comparing their new *Bond* with the former *Covenant*, they call it *the necessary Explanation and Application thereof already sworn by us*. Again, in *Reason* 6th, speaking of their late *Confession* of Faith or *Covenant*, they thus proceed, 'What is the Use of March-stones upon Borders of Lands, the like Use hath *Confessions of Faith* in the Kirk, to disermine and divide betwixt Truth and Error; and the renewing and applying of *Confessions of Faith* to the present Errors and Corruptions, are not unlike ridding of Marches: And, therefore, to content ourselves with the general, and to return to it, from the particular *Application* of the *Confession*, necessarily made, upon the Invasion, or creeping-in of Errors within the Borders of the Kirk, if it be not a removing of the March-stone from the own Place, it is, at least, the hiding of the March in the Ground, that it be not seen, which, at this Time, were very unreasonable.' Moreover, in *Reason* 11th, speaking against the Sameness of the former National *Covenant*, and the then *Bond*, renewing the same, they plead that there is 'no substantial Difference between that which we have subscribed, and the *Confession* subscribed in the Year 1580, more than there is between that which is hid, and that which is revealed, a March-stone hid in the Ground and uncovered, between the Hand closed and open, between a Sword sheathed and drawn, &c.'

Thus, we find the Plea our Reformers managed against the King, in defending their late *Covenant* as *substantially* the same with, and so, a necessary Manner of renewing the former: And it is, in so far, just such another Plea which the Presbytery

now have with Mr. Nairn. And it is remarkable, that, when our Reformers renewed the *National Covenant*, by framing and swearing a *new Bond different in Form and Words* from the former, they actually considered this as a *Precedent* to be followed by *Posterity* in the *Manner of renewing the Covenant*: For, in the 5th Reason of Protest, they refuse to satisfy themselves with the *old Form and Words* of the Covenant, and so to lay aside the *new Form and Words* whereinto they had put it, 'because this ' would (say they) precondemn also the *like* laudable Course in ' the *like* Necessity, to be taken by the *Posterity*.'

After all then, can there be any thing plainer, than that the Method of renewing the Covenants which the *Presbytery* proposes, is really a Renewing of them, without *Dissimulation*, and that it is *exactly agreeable* to the *Example* of our Reformers; yea, just *such* a Method as they *expected* *Posterity* was to take?

And now it has been sufficiently manifested, that the Method which Mr. Nairn proposes, is very *unreasonable*, quite *absurd* and *impracticable*; that therein he is *inconsistent* with *himself*; that it is altogether *unprecedented* in the Church; and, finally, that the Method proposed by the *Presbytery* is really a *Renewing* of our solemn Covenants, according to the *Example* of our Reformers. Thus, all the Reason of *Dissent* and *Secession* which Mr. Nairn here brings in, as to the *Form and Manner* of renewing the Covenants, is quite *unreasonable* and *null*; and all the *Noise* he raises against the *Presbytery*, in this Matter, is wholly *groundless* and *impertinent*.

It is now Time to proceed,

2dly, To consider Mr. Nairn's Disagreement with the Renovation of the Covenants proposed by the *Presbytery*, as to the *Matter* thereof: And this is expressed in the *Close* of the Reason of *Dissent* and *Secession* now under Consideration; where he complains, that a swearing to endeavour the *Extirpation* of *Popery* and *Prelacy*, is altogether omitted in this present Oath or Covenant.

This is a very *strange* Passage, which can signify nothing, if it bear not a ridiculous *Insinuation*, as if the *Presbytery* had a *secret Favour* for *Popery* and *Prelacy*, so as to drop an Engagement against the same; than which there cannot be a more *groundless* and *invidious Alledgeance*. For the *Bond*, as it stood at the Time of Mr. Nairn's *Secession*, did expressly reduplicate upon the preceeding *Confession of Sins*, *abjuring Popery* and *Prelacy*, as there confessed. But, moreover, it must be remembered, that, when Mr. Nairn seceded, the *Bond* was still under the Consideration of the *Presbytery*; and, as the World may see, there is an express *Abjuration* of, and *Engagement* against *Popery* and

and *Prelacy*, in that Bond, as it *presently* stands. As for the Presbytery's not using there the Word [*Extirpation*] it is well enough known that *that* Word has been, of *late* Years, abused to a *sanguinary* Sense, for *propagating* Religion by *offensive Arms*, quite *contrary* to the Mind of our Reformers; nor are we so situate as our Reformers, in having the *Concurrence* of *Civil Powers* for managing *necessary* and *lawful* Process against *Malignants*; and therefore it is necessary that the Presbytery make Use of Words, in this Case, expressing the *same* Matter, in a Way *opposite* to present Errors, and agreeable to our *present* Circumstances.

And now it appears that the *Clamour* which Mr. *Nairn* here makes, and his whole *first Reason* of *Dissent* and *Secession*, are most *unreasonable*.

R E A S O N I I .

' In the next Place, As to the Civil Part of the above Covenants, 'tis altogether omitted; and that seems to be industriously done, because of the Inconsistency of that we are sworn to by the Covenants, with the acknowledging the present Government, which is not upon the Footing of our ancient and covenanted Constitution. By the Covenants we are sworn to preserve the Rights and Privileges of the Parliaments; and to preserve and defend the King's Majesty's Person and Authority, in the Preservation and Defence of the true Religion. Now, our Kings were, by the Law and their Coronation Oath, bound to maintain the true Religion of Christ, to abolish all false Religions, to the Reformation of Religion in *England* and *Ireland*, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, according to the Word of God; to extirpate Popery, Prelacy, &c. But, according to our present Constitution by the Union, the Doctrine and Government of the Church of *England* is to take Place in it; and the King, at his Coronation, is bound, and does swear to maintain the same inviolably.

' And therefore 'tis inconsistent with our Covenants, that we should be obliged to preserve the Privileges of the present Parliament, that stands upon the Footing of the Union, and that we should acknowledge a King that's sworn not to observe our Covenants, by reforming *England*, and extirpating Prelacy there: But, on the contrary, to maintain and preserve inviolably the Settlement of the Church of *England's* Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, as established at the Time of the Union in *England* and *Ireland*.'

ANSWER.

A N S W E R.

In this *second Reason of Dissent and Secession*, Mr. Nairn is *still* striking out against the *Presbytery's Accommodation of the Covenants to our present Situation*: And here, indeed, he runs headlong into surprizing *Self-contradictions*. For,

1st, He complains, that, *as to the Civil Part of the above Covenants, 'tis altogether omitted*. Now, what can Mr. Nairn mean by this Complaint? One would think, from *these Words*, that he wete condemning the *Presbytery*, for *not applying the Civil Part* of our Covenants to the *present King and Government*. But *this* cannot be his Meaning, because *himself* is contending against the *Lawfulness* of such an *Application*. Well then, Mr. Nairn grants, that the Covenants are to be sworn with *Application* to our *present Circumstances*, (as indeed, otherwise they could not become *our Oath*) but he is utterly against *applying the Civil Part* of the Covenants to our *present Circumstances*, *that is*, the understanding it of the *present King and Government*: Thus, a chief Thing he is now contending for, all along, is to drop and explode any *present Meaning* of the Civil Part; he's for swearing the *Civil Part*, only as declaring and avouching his Principles and Duty with respect to some Magistrate that *may afterwards* (and perhaps never) be. But this is only a *prophetical* Meaning he gives to the Words, which is *inconsistent* with the *Tenor* of the Words, and with the *Nature* of the *Oath*. It is *soon enough* to avouch one's Principles and Duty anent a Magistrate, when once that Magistrate *has a Being* in the World: No Body can have God's Call to do so *sooner*, for God never *calls* to any Duty, till he gives *Occasion* for the *Discharge* of it, that is, till it be an *actual Duty*. Now when, after all, Mr. Nairn finds Fault with omitting the *Civil Part*, in renewing our Covenants, the Sense cannot be, that he condemns the leaving out any *present Meaning* of the Civil Part, (for this is the same Thing he *himself* contends for) but the Sense must be, That he condemns the not *retaining* and *repeating* the *bare Words* of the Civil Part, *as stript* of any *present Meaning* or Sense at all. Thus, he's for exploding the *Meaning*, and extolling the *Words*; and he *dissents* and *secedes* from the *Presbytery*, because *they* will not *do so* too: A singular Step indeed! Common Sense tells, that *Words* are of no Consequence at all, without some *present Sense*: And if Mr. Nairn acted *consistently*, when he's for omitting the *Meaning* of the Civil Part, he would be for omitting the *Words* too: But while he is *zealous for the Words*, and *against their Meaning*, let the World

judge

judge, if any Zeal can be more *blind, absurd and ridiculous* But,

The plain Case is, The Covenants were entred into and frequently renewed by the *Interposition* of the Civil Authority as well as the *Ecclesiastick*: But, as there is no *Interposition at present* of Civil Authority, in the Renewing of the Covenants; so the *Presbytery* reckon it improper for *them* to meddle in these Matters that are of a *Civil Nature*; and therefore, they could do nothing *this Way* in their *Accommodation* of the Covenants to the present Time. But,

2dly, While Mr. Nairn complains of the *Presbytery* for omitting the Civil Part of our Covenants; he produces a very *strange Reason* for their doing so. *It seems* (says he) *to be industriously done*; that is, *designedly*, and for some *peculiar Reason* which the *Presbytery* must have in their Eye. Their Reason, as he alledges, is this, 'Because of the *Inconsistency* of *that* we are sworn to by the Covenants, with the *acknowledging* the present Government.' Now,

1. This says, That the *Presbytery* are convinced of an *Inconsistency* betwixt our Covenant-Oaths, and an acknowledging the present Government; which is an *invidious* Insinuation, and what Mr. Nairn knows very well to be *false*. But,

2. His Language here can signify nothing *less*, than that he looks upon the *Presbytery* as granting an *Inconsistency* betwixt our Covenant-Obligations, and an acknowledging the present Government: But is not the *Presbytery's* denying any such *Inconsistency*, a Thing for which he is, all along, crying out against them? Can the *Presbytery* be of *both* these Principles? Can he consist with *himself* in charging them with *both*? Again, if Mr. Nairn thinks, what his Words here mean, that the *Presbytery* grant an *Inconsistency* betwixt our Covenant-Obligations, and an acknowledging the present Government; why then does he immediately after proceed to argue for *persuading* them of this *Inconsistency*?

Unto the Close of the *first* Paragraph of this *second* Reason of Dissent, &c. Mr. Nairn goes on to prove, that the *present* Government is not upon the Footing of our *ancient and covenanted Constitution*. If he speaks to the Purpose here, he means the covenanted *Deed* of Constitution, in reforming Periods. And so, all that he advances for proving what is here asserted, the *Presbytery* grants to be *true*; whence he needed not spend many Words upon it.

He proceeds next to infer, That it is *inconsistent* with our Covenants to support and acknowledge the King and Parliament in their *present* Condition. This is just the same with what he al-

edges in his *former* Dissent, which has been *already* answered; and it is what he needed not to argue upon, if it be true, as he before alledges, that the *Presbytery* are already *convinced* of the said *Inconsistency*. However, he doth not here speak unto the *Question* betwixt the *Presbytery* and him, if he means *any other* Preservation of the Privileges of Parliament, or *any other* Acknowledgment of the King, *than* what belongs unto the *Principle* which the *Presbytery* maintains, *viz.* That we ought to *acknowledge* the present Civil Authority over these Nations, and to *subject* ourselves thereunto, in *lawful Commands*. This is a Principle that respects *only* these Things which are *lawful* in the present Government: And it is very *invidious* to insinuate, as if it did any way countenance the *Corruptions* of the present King and Parliament, with reference to the *Union*, and the Settlement of the *English Church*; all which the *Presbytery*, as well as Mr. *Nairn*, acknowledge to be *Corruptions* that should be *testified* against. What manner of *Sibness* has the *Presbytery's* Principle anent *lawful* Things, with an Acknowledgment of what they confess *unlawful*? Are not Things *lawful* and *unlawful*, altogether *distinct* from, and quite *opposite* to one another? As hath been shewn in the *Conclusion* of the *Answers* unto the *former* Dissent, all that Mr. *Nairn* advances of Things *unlawful* in the present Government, does indeed say, That we ought to *testify* against *these*, but it does not, in the *remotest* Manner, militate against the *Presbytery's* Principle respecting what is still *lawful*: And so he hitherto attacks their Principle *only* by *bare Assertion*, which can be no *Reason* of Dissent or Secession.

What comes next to be adverted unto, is the *Conclusion* that Mr. *Nairn* gives unto the Paper now under Consideration; and it is as follows.

‘ It is plain, therefore, that the present Covenant, proposed to be taken, is not the same with our former Covenants; and therefore the taking it, is not a Renewing of these Covenants, but a burying, sopiting and destroying them, by substituting another in their Place, whereby honest People may be imposed on, in a Matter that is sacred; whereas the greatest Sincerity and Singleness of Heart ought to be observed.

‘ Upon the whole, as it appears from the above-mentioned Testimony by the *Presbytery*, and their approved Overture in Corroboration of the same, and from the Form of taking and renewing the Covenants agreed to by the *Presbytery*, that they have not sincerely at Heart to adhere to our Covenanted Work of Reformation, sworn to by our said National and Solemn Covenants, in their true, genuine and full Sense: I do, therefore, hereby not only dissent from these Resolutions, or Acts of

the Presbytery, but I do further appeal from them, to the first free and faithful Judicatory of our Lord Jesus Christ; and I hereby secede from the said Presbytery, and hereupon I take Instruments.'

(*Sic subscribitur*) THO. NAIRN.

All the *Objections* that Mr. Nairn hath offered against the *Form and Matter* of that *Bond*, whereby the Presbytery propose to renew our Covenants, have been fully *answered* already; and, therein, it hath been sufficiently manifested, that what the Presbytery *propose* is *really* a Renovation of our solemn Covenants, according to the laudable *Example* of our reformatory *Ancestors*. Wherefore it appears, that all Mr. Nairn's *Outcry*, as to their being any way chargeable, in this Matter, with *burying* *sopiting*, and *destroying* the same, with *substituting* another in their Place, or with *Imposition* upon the People in a Matter sacred, is, at best, but an *unreasonable* and *groundless* *Calumny*.

The Presbytery need not be at all moved or discouraged by the *Charge* that Mr. Nairn lays against them, of *Hypocrisy*, and *Heart-apostasy* from our Reformation and Covenants: They have Reason to rejoice in being counted *worthy* to suffer such an *invidious* *Reproach*; which, in the *Event*, can prove an *intolerable* *Burden* only unto its *Author*.

It hath now been clearly manifested, that any Thing, or all Mr. Nairn hath advanced, cannot amount unto the *smallest* *Reason* of *Dissent*, far less of the *Appeal* which he makes, to the first free and faithful Judicatory of our Lord Jesus Christ, without telling in what *Region* of the Earth he expects such a Judicatory to *arise*. However, upon the *unreasonable* Grounds he has laid down, he goes frankly on to the weighty Step of *seceding* from this Presbytery: a Step which he may afterwards get more *Leisure* and *Occasion* to weigh.

For concluding the Answers unto Mr. Nairn's Paper of *Secession*, it may be proper to look *back*, and give a brief View of the Progress which therein hath been *already* made.

The Reasons of *Dissent* and *Secession*, which he hath advanced, are reduceable to these four Heads.

I. He argues, that the *Form and Manner* of renewing the Covenants, which the Presbytery proposes, is *not* a *Renewing* of them, &c.

But, in *Answer* hereunto, it hath been *proven*, that the *Method* of renewing the Covenants, which Mr. Nairn insists for in Opposition to the Presbytery, is very *unreasonable*; quite *absurd* and *impracticable*; altogether *unprecedented*: That, therein, Mr. Nairn is *inconsistent* with *himself*; and finally, that the

Method, proposed by the Presbytery, is really a Renewing of our solemn Covenants according to the laudable *Example* of our *Reformers*.

2. He asserts, That a swearing to endeavour the *Extirpation* of *Popery* and *Prelacy*, is altogether omitted in the Presbytery's Bond. But this hath been proven altogether a *Mistake*.

3. He asserts, That the *civil* Part of the Covenants is altogether omitted. But this hath been already sufficiently answered.

Moreover, tho' these *three* foregoing Points (which respect the *Renovation* of the Covenants) had been all true; yet it seems uncommonly *rash* for Mr. *Nairn* to dissent, far more to *secede* upon these Grounds, in regard the Presbytery's Proposal, about renewing the Covenants, had never yet become a *finished Deed*, but was still lying open, and under Consideration.

4. The only Thing farther that he adduces as Ground of *Dissent* and *Secession* (besides the groundless *Reproaches* already noticed) is, the Presbytery's *Principle* anent the present Civil Government. His *Opposition* to this Principle is what he hath not produced *one Reason* for, but has, all along, attack'd the same only by *bare Assertions*; which can be no Reason for the Course he has taken. And therefore, notwithstanding all he has advanced for the Support thereof, that both his *Dissent*, and his *Secession*, are altogether *groundless* and *unreasonable*, doth fully appear from what hath been already said.

However, for illustrating the Truth, for the Information of those who are prejudiced, and for the Establishment of others; the Presbytery resolve to enter yet more particularly into the *Question*, betwixt Mr. *Nairn* and them, about the Civil Government; where they will have Occasion to deal with him in an *offensive* Way, as they have already finish'd their *Defence* against him: And all this shall be done in the following

DECLARATION and DEFENCE of the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY's Principles anent the present Civil Government.

BY the indispenfible Call, the tender Mercy, and the holy Providence of God, this Presbytery have been, and are gradually led out, in displaying the Banner of a Testimony for the glorious Reformation once attained to in these Lands, according to the Word of God, and our Solemn Covenants; as also, against the Defections made therefrom, and the Injuries done thereunto, in former and present Times.

Some Years ago they emitted a *judicial Act and Testimony*, which they have since, through Divine Assistance, been enabled to maintain and *prosecute*. According to the particular Calls of Providence *hitherto*, that Testimony, together with the Prosecution thereof which has *already* been, was *especially* in favours of our ancient *Ecclesiastical* Reformation, and against these Evils whereby the *same* hath been, in a great measure, departed from and overthrown: While, *also*, a Testimony for our ancient *Civil* Reformation, and against these Evils whereby the *same* hath been, in a great measure, deviated from and destroyed, was *lifted up*, and, all along, carried *forward*, particularly as to these Points which are more immediately *connected* with the *principal* Matter foreaid.

But, at *this* Time, the Presbytery have a *particular* Call of Providence, to bear witness more *especially* unto our ancient *Civil* Reformation; and not only against manifold *Defections* from, and *Attacks* upon the *same*, but also against some *gross* and *dangerous* *Mistakes* that have been *lately* propagated *thereanent*.

There was a *Paragraph* once inserted into the *Overture* anent renewing the Covenants, and afterwards translated into a *separate Act*, which condemns, particularly, 'the dangerous *Extreme* that some have gone into, of *impugning* the present *Civil* Authority over these Nations, and *Subjection* thereunto in lawful Commands, on account of the Want of these Qualifications Magistrates ought to have, by the Word of God and our Covenants; even although they allow us in the free Exercise of our Religion, and are not manifestly unhinging the Liberties of the Kingdom.' For *supporting* the *Condemnation* of this *Extreme*, the Presbytery were very far from being under any Necessity to *extenuate* the *Corruptions* of the present *Civil* Government, of what sort *soever*, particularly, as to any Want of Qualifications, necessary by the Word of God and our Covenants, wherewith the Magistrate is *justly* chargeable: Nor did the Presbytery reckon it *warrantable* for them to be *silent*, on that Occasion, anent these Matters, as the being *so*, in such a Case, might have tended to *harden* a wicked Generation, and to *bewilder* a witnessing Remnant. Accordingly, in the *first* Clause of the foreaid *Paragraph* and *Act*, the Presbytery lay down as Ground of *Humiliation* before the Lord, 'the *National Apostacy*, under which the Lord's Remnant through the Land have been groaning, while our *Rulers* have not only *neglected*, but *contradicted* their *Duty*, of *espousing* and *supporting* the *covenanted* Principles of this Church, whereby they have greatly *provoked* the Lord to Anger.'

And now, while the Presbytery are led out to a Debate, in
favourites

favours of their *condemning* the above-mentioned *dangerous Extreme*, and for vindicating the *Principle* they maintain in *Opposition* thereunto; they *still*, upon the *foresaid* Grounds, reckon it *unwarrantable* for them, to drop the *conjunct* and *previous* Consideration of the *National Apostacy*, and the *Corruption* of our *Rulers*; and they conceive, that, for the *Conviction* of an apostate Generation, and for the *Direction* of the Lord's People in witnessing Work, it is necessary, on *this* Occasion, to *begin* with *enlarging* upon that Subject, particularly, by opposing our *ancient Civil Reformation* to our *present Civil Deformation*. And,

I. As it was once a peculiar Duty of the *Jewish Nation*, so it is peculiarly incumbent upon *every Civil State*, whereinto Christianity is introduced, to study and bring to pass, that Civil Government among them, in all the Appurtenances of its *Constitution* and *Administration*, run in an *Agreeableness* to the *Word of God*, be *subservient* unto the *spiritual Kingdom* of *Jesus Christ*, and to the *Interests* of the *true Religion* and *Reformation* of the *Church*, as otherwise they cannot *truly* prosper in their *Civil Concerns*, nor be enriched by the *Blessings* of the *Gospel*.

This Duty, so incumbent upon the *Civil State*, doth generally fall under these *two Heads*: *First*, The *whole People*, adjoining themselves to the *true Church*, should approve themselves to be *true Members* thereof, by *serious, several, and mutual* Endeavours to promote the *true Religion* and *Reformation* of the *Church*, *privately, publicly, and universally*, in their *several Places* and *Callings*. *Secondly*, This *People*, considered in their *conjunct* and *politick Capacity* (as *thus only* the *Matter* is *competent* unto them) should, by their *Deed* of *Civil Constitution*, provide, that their *Magistrates* be obliged to *concur* in the same *true Religion* and *Reformation*, and to rule them by *Laws* no way *prejudicial*, but *serviceable* thereunto; as, moreover, they ought to *obey, encourage, and support* their *Magistrates* in *that Way*, and effectually to endeavour their *Information* and *Reformation*, where deficient or corrupt.

Our *Ancestors*, upon the *Reformation* from *Popery*, were enabled unto great *Faithfulness* in the *Discharge* of *this* Duty. The *true Religion*, purged from the erroneous, idolatrous, and superstitious Abominations of *Popery*, was, by the *Blessing* of *God*, embraced and professed by *all Ranks*, who were also engaged in a general and progressive Course of *Reformation* *foresaid*. Agreeably unto all this, the *Deed* of *Civil Constitution* was set upon a *reformed Footing* by A^d VIII. Parl. 1. *James VI.* while, therein,

‘ Because that the Increase of *Vertew*, and suppressing of *Idolatry*, craues, that the *Prince* and the *People* be of *ane* per-
‘ fite

fite Religioun, quhilk of God's Mercie is now preſentely pro-
 feſſed within this Realme: **THEIRFORE** it is *ſtatute* and
ordained, be our Sovereaine Lord, my Lord Regent, and three
 Eſtates of this preſent Parliament, that all Kinges and Princes,
 or Magiſtrates whatſoever, halding their Place, quhilkis here-
 after, *in ony Time*, ſhall happen to reigne, and beare Rule over
 this Realme, at the Time of their Coronatioun, and Receipt of
 their Princely Authoritie, make their faithfull Promiſe be Aith,
 in Preſence of the *Eternall God*, That induring the hail
 Courſe of their Liues, they ſhall *ſerve* the ſamin Eternall God,
 to the vttermoſt of their Power, according as he hes requir-
 ed in his maiſt haly Word, reveiled and contained in the new
 and auld Testaments. And, according to the ſamin Worde,
 ſhall *mainteine* the trew Religioun of Chriſt Jeſus, the preaching
 of his halie Word, and dew and richt Miniſtration of the Sa-
 craments, now receiued, and preached within this Realme:
 And ſhall *abolish* and *gainſtand* all fals Religioun, contrare to
 the ſamin: And ſhall *rule* the Peopill committed to their
 Charge, according to the Will and Commaund of God, reveil-
 ed in his foreſaide Word, and according to the loueabill Lawes
 and Conſtitutions received in this Realme, na wiſe repugnant
 to the ſaid Word of the Eternall God. And ſhall *procure*, to
 the vtermaſt of their Power, to the Kirk of God, and hail
 Chriſtian Peopill, tiew and perſite Peace in all Time cumming;
 The Richtis and Rentis, with all juſt Privileges of the Crowne
 of **SCOTLAND**, to *preſerve* and *keip inviolated*, nouthir
 ſhall they *transfer* nor *alienate* the ſamin. They ſhall forbid
 and *repreſſe*, in all Eſtates and Degries, Reiſe, Oppreſſion,
 and all kinde of Wrang. In all Judgement, they ſhall *com-*
mand and *procure*, that Juſtice and Equitie be *keiped* to all
 Creatures, without Exception, as the Lord and Father of all
 Mercyis be merciful to them. And out of their Landes and
 Empyre, they ſhall be careful to *rute out* all Heretikes, and E-
 nemies to the trew Worſhip of God, that ſhall be convict be the
 true Kirk of God, of the foirſaidis Crymes. And that they
 ſhall faithfullie affirme the things above written, be their ſolemn
 Aith.

Though the above *Settlement* was, for ſome time, followed
 by ſuitable *Adminiſtration*; yet a Courſe of lamentable Defecti-
 on, and Corruption therein, did *ſoon* prevail; 'till a Reviving
 of the *true Religion* and Reformation in the *Church*, took place,
 and was gloriously advanced betwixt the Years 1638 and 1650.
 That *Work of God*, which became then engaged unto throughout
 the three Kingdoms, by a *Solemn League and Covenant*, was al-
 ſo, in an Agreeableneſſe to this *Covenant*, accompanied with,

and supported by a *Civil Reformation*. In *England* (wherewith we have become more nearly concerned than formerly, by virtue of the *Solemn League and Covenant*) the *Civil Administration* was, in some valuable Instances, *subservient* unto the said *Work of God*. But more considerable Advances were made in *Scotland*; while, beside many laudable *Acts* in the *Civil Administration*, the *Deed of Civil Constitution* was farther reformed, than ever before, by *Act XV.* of the 2d Session of Parliament, *Anno 1649*, while therein,

‘ The Estates of Parliament, taking to their most serious Consideration, the unhappy Differences between their late Sovereign and these Kingdoms, caused by the evil Counsels about him, unto the great Prejudice of Religion, and long Disturbance of the Peace of these Kingdoms: As likeways, the manifold *Acts* of Parliament, and fundamental Constitution of this Kingdom, anent the King’s Oath at his Coronation, which, judging it necessary, that the *Prince* and *People* be of one perfect Religion, appointeth, that all Kings and Princes, who shall reign or bear Rule over this Realm, shall, at their Coronation, or Receipt of their Princely Authority, solemnly swear to observe in their own Persons, and to preserve the Religion, as it is presently established and professed, and rule the People committed to their Charge, according to the Will of God, revealed in his Word, and the loveable Constitutions received within this Kingdom, and do sundry other things, which are more fully expressed therein: And, withal, pondering their manifold Obligations to endeavour the securing of Religion and the Covenant, before and above all worldly Interests; THEREFORE they do Enact, Ordain, and Declare, That, before the King’s Majesty who now is, or any of his Successors, shall be admitted to the Exercise of his Royal Power, he shall, by and attour the foresaid Oath, assure and declare by his solemn Oath, under his Hand and Seal, his Allowance of the National Covenant, and of the Solemn League and Covenant, and Obligation to prosecute the Ends thereof, in his Station and Calling: And that he shall, for himself and his Successors, consent and agree to Acts of Parliament enjoining the Solemn League and Covenant, and fully establishing Presbyterian Government, the Directory of Worship, Confession of Faith and Catechisms, as they are approved by the General Assembly of this Kirk, and Parliament of this Kingdom, in all his Majesty’s Dominions; and that he shall observe these in his own Practice and Family; and that he shall never make Opposition to any of these, or endeavour any Change thereof.

‘ It is also declared, enacted, and ordained, That, before the King,

King, who *now is*, be admitted to the Exercise of his Royal Power, he shall leave all Counsel and Counsellors *prejudicial* to Religion, and to the National Covenant, and to the Solemn League and Covenant; and give *Satisfaction* to the Parliament of this Kingdom, as it is now constitute, in what further shall be found necessary for the *settling* of a happy and durable Peace, *Preservation* of the Union between the Kingdoms, and for the Good of the Crown, and for his own Honour and Happiness; and shall *consent* and *agree*, that all Matters *Civil* be determined by the *Parliament* of this Kingdom, and all *Ecclesiastick* Matters by the General *Assembly* of this Kirk: For the which Ends, the Estates of Parliament are *resolved* to make their humble and earnest Addresses to his Majesty, with all possible Expedition; all which they find themselves bound to *prosecute*, and *resolve* not to *recede* therefrom, but to see the same *really performed*.

Likeas, the Estates of Parliament discharges all the Lieges and Subjects of this Kingdom, to procure or receive from his Majesty, any Commissions, Patents, Honours, Offices, or Gifts whatsoever, *until* his Majesty give Satisfaction, as said is; under the Pain of being censured, in their Persons and Estates, as the Parliament, or any having Power from them, shall judge fitting.

And, if any such Commissions, Patents, Honours, Offices, or Gifts, shall be procured or received by any of the Subjects of this Kingdom, *before* such Satisfaction; the Parliament *declares* and *ordains* all such Commissions, Patents, Honours, Offices or Gifts, and all that shall follow thereupon, to be void and null.

And, according unto *this Settlement*, was King *Charles II.* crowned at *Scoon*, *January 1. 1650.*

The Presbytery intend not to affirm, that there was nothing *defective* in the above Managements, or that no *Imprudences* or *Mistakes* were to be found therein. It is evident, however, that, by the good Hand of God, the Estates of *England*, but more especially of *Scotland*, were inspired with a noble and predominant Zeal for the House of God, in all its valuable Institutions; and attained to a considerable Pitch of *Civil Reformation*, subservient unto the same: All which this Presbytery desires with Thankfulness to *commemorate* and *bear Witness* unto. Upon the whole, it is *observable*, that, in *Scotland*, the Reformation of the Church hath always (in a *beautiful Order*) *preceeded* and *introduced* the Reformation of the State. But,

II. It was not long till our Sky, thus clearing up, was sadly *clouded*, and this beautiful Work *smother'd*, as it were, in the

very Cradle, by the woful Apostacy of that *same* Generation, especially, at and after the *Restoration* of King *Charles II.*

The fatal *Overtthrow* of the former Civil Reformation; the *Devastation* of the House and Heritage of God; the *unparalleled* Course of *Perjury, Treachery, Tyranny*, and desperate *Hostility* against the *King, Cause, and Subjects* of *Zion*; and against the *Liberties* of Mankind; together with the Nourishment of abjur'd *Prelacy, Popery*, and all Abominations; which were carried on with an high and heaven-daring Hand, in that Period, by the Edge, and under the Wings of *Civil Government*; are somewhat laid open in the *judicial Act and Testimony*, and are so fully manifested in known *Histories*, as they need not here be particularly insisted on. However, these things have been so little considered and mourned over, and the great Atonement for Sin so little look'd to and improv'd for *expiating* the same, that it is to be feared the hainous *Guilt* thereof is still lying upon the *Throne, the Body politic*, and all *Ranks* in these Lands.

At and since the wonderful *Revolution, Anno 1688*, the three Kingdoms have been rescued, by the surprizing Favour of God, from intolerable *Tyranny, Popery* and *Slavery*: And this *Presbytery* dare not, without Ingratitude to God, and Injustice to the Subject presently under Consideration, *dissemble* or *lightly esteem* the *Stigma* then put upon the *infamous Government* of the former Period; the *Justice* and *Honour* done to the *Cloud* of *Witnesses* and *Sufferers* through the same, by the *Act* rescinding *Fines* and *Forfeitures*; as also, what *Security* is given, by the present Civil Government, unto our *Religion, Lives* and *Liberties*, such as no other People now on Earth enjoys the like.

Notwithstanding, though the Lord hath dealt so bountifully with these Nations, they have not duly *remembered* him in his Ways; they have made no due *Requit*, by *returning* unto that beautiful Reformation, for apostatizing wherefrom, they were sorely plagued, during the Space of about twenty eight Years. The Kingdom of *England*, at the *Revolution*, still adhered unto their Apostacy, in keeping their Government settled in favours of abjur'd *Prelacy*, and according to the wicked Laws which had been made against *England's* Reformation. The Kingdom of *Scotland*, at that Time, in settling their Government, and in offering the Crown to King *William* and Queen *Mary*, not only overlook'd the whole Civil Reformation attained to betwixt the Years 1638 and 1650, but left the wicked Laws, *revoking* and *razing* the same, *untouched*, and in Force. Moreover, at the *incorporating Union* with *England, Anno 1707*, a farther, and very lamentable Step of Defection was made, in our *Civil Settlement*; in regard the *Maintenance* and *Preservation*

of the *Hierarchy and Ceremonies* of the Church of England, is a *fundamental and essential Article* of the said Union; so that it stands upon Terms *opposite* unto, and *inconsistent* with our *Covenant-Union*, whereby this Kingdom is more deeply involved in *Perjury*, and the Guilt of *England's Apostasy and Corruption*, while *consenting* thereunto. In a Word, since the *Revolution*, and by the *Union-Settlement*, tho' *Papists*, and such as marry *Papists*, are absolutely *excluded* from the Crown, (which is a thing very laudable) and while our Kings are *obliged* to swear, at their *Coronation*, That they shall inviolably *maintain* and *preserve* the *Settlement* and *Privileges* of the Church of *Scotland*, as by Law established; yet they are, at the *same* time, taken bound and *obliged* to *communicate* with, and to *maintain* and *preserve* inviolably the *Settlement* and *Privileges* of the Church of *England*, in the Kingdoms of *England* and *Ireland*. And, upon the whole, it appears, that, under the *present Constitution*, a mighty *Bar* is thrust into the Way of our *covenanted Reformation*, both in Church and State; yea, a *Gravestone* is laid, and established upon the same.

Thus, our ancient *Civil Reformation* has been *apostatized* from, and grievously *defaced*. Notwithstanding the golden *Season* afforded us, and the powerful *Obligation* we were laid under unto the Lord, by his surprizing *Appearance* for us at the *Revolution*; yet *all Ranks* have dealt very *treacherously* and *ungratefully*: They have not studied *personal Reformation*; they have not endeavoured, *severally* and *conjunctly*, to promote the *true Religion* and *Reformation* of the *Church*, once attained to and professed in these Lands: The *Body Politick*, particularly in *Scotland*, have never, by their *Deed of Civil Constitution*, provided that their *Magistrates* be brought under, and admitted upon *Obligations* and *Terms*, such as were fixed upon, and established in *reforming* Periods, (particularly in the *Coronation-Oath*, *Annis 1567* and *1649*) but such as are, in many *Respects*, not only *different* from, but *destructive* of the same, unto the great *Prejudice* of *real Religion*, and *Reformation* in the *House of God*: They have never endeavoured to *inform* their *Magistrates* of their *Sin* and *Duty*, in this Matter, or to *reform* them from *Corruptions*; but, on the contrary, they have been a *Snare*, and a *Stumbling-block* unto them. And it is evident, that, on all these *Accounts*, great *Guilt*, and *Wrath* from the Lord, is *still* lying and *increasing* upon the *Body Politick*; wherein also *all Ranks*, our *Princes*, our *Pastors*, our *People*, are very deeply involved.

Moreover, as our *Civil Settlement* has been thus *corrupted*, so it hath natively issued in a Course of *defective* and *corrupt Administration*, unto the *Dishonour* of God, and the *Detriment* of his

Work. The Presbytery do not pretend to give out a full Enumeration of these, and they only mention the following.

At the *Revolution*, *Prelacy* was not abolished as *contrary* to the Word of God, and *abjured* by our Covenants: The Settlement of *Presbytery* was according to the *former* Settlement, *Anno* 1592; and all the legal *Securities* given to this Church from 1638 to 1650, were *overlooked*; nor was any *Regard* had to the solemn *Oaths* and *Covenants*, which we *then* came under: The *wicked Laws*, *Anno* 1661, *condemning* and *razing* our Covenanted Reformation, were *left untouched*; a *general* Oath of Allegiance was imposed, plainly *excluding* the Oath of our Covenants; and, *contrary* to the reformed Practice, *Anno* 1649, *such* were retained in Places of publick Trust, and military Office, as were *Enemies* to our Reformation, and had been *deeply involved* in the *horrid* *Defection*, *Persecution*, and *Bloodshed* of the former Period. The Power and Privileges of the Church were *encroached* upon, by *dissolving* the *Assembly* 1692, and *adjourning* the same from Time to Time till 1694; as indeed, by the Act 1592, according to which *Presbytery* was settled at the *Revolution*, the *Assembly* is *deprived* of *Power*, where the King or his Commissioner are *present*, to *nominate* and *appoint* Time and Place for their next Meeting.

After the *Union*, the whole Nation was made to groan under the Weight of *unnecessary*, *repeated*, *sinful*, and *ensnaring* Oaths. A *superstitious* Form of *Swearing*, by *laying* the Hands upon, and *kissing* the Gospels, was soon introduced from England; and a Foundation was laid for the farther *debauching* the Members of this Church, by the *Sacramental Test*: While, also, the Oath of *Abjuration* was first imposed on these in *Civil* and *Military* Trust, and afterwards extended to the *Ministers* of this Church; and which, however, at Length, *altered*, did still *homologate* the *united* *Constitution*, and the *Corruptions* of the Church of England, involved therein. Farther, tho' any *active* *Toleration* to the *least* Evil, be altogether *unwarrantable*; yet, in the Year 1712, a very *Dangerous* Blow was given to the *Government* and *Discipline* of this Church, and a very wide Door was opened to *Error* and *Profanity*, by an almost *boundless* *Toleration*: and, at the same Time, a very *sinful* and *sad* *Encroachment* was made upon the costly and valuable *Privileges* of the Lord's People, and a Door opened for the *Corruption* of the Church, and the *Ruin* of Souls, while the Right of *Patronages* (which had been *abolished*, *Anno* 1649) was again *restored*; and however this was afterwards *restricted*; yet it has still continued an *intolerable* *Yoke* and *Snare*, the lamentable *Effects* whereof have *overspread* this Land. *Countenance* has been likewise given for introducing
amongst

amongst us the *Abjured superstition* of observing *Holy-Days*; and that by the *Vacation* of our most considerable *Courts* of *Justice*, in the latter End of *December*. And, as, by the *Union*, this Kingdom hath become subjected to a Parliament whereof the *Bishops* of *England* are constituent *Members*; so, an Attempt is made to force the *Members* of this Church unto an *Approbation* of the *English Hierarchy*, while they can get no *Addresses* received by the *Upper House* of Parliament, unless they bear a *Direction* to the *Lords spiritual* as well as *temporal*.

The above are Evils that have taken deep Root among us, for a considerable Time, and the most whereof are more particularly spokè to in the *judicial Act and Testimony*.

Moreover, the *Law of God* hath been *despised*, and a *Toleration*, upon the Matter, given to *Diabolical Arts and Practices*, by the *Act* repealing the *penal Statutes* against *Witches*. Likewise (as hath been declared by this Presbytery in their *Declination*) a bold and fatal *Encroachment* was made, *Anno 1737*, upon the *Headship and Sovereignty* of *Zion's King*, by that *Erastian Act* anent Captain *John Porteous*. Farther, tho' it be *unwarrantable* for the Civil Magistrate, in *ordinary Cases*, and where *there is*, and where Access may be had to the *Judicatories* of a *right constitute Church*, or that he sustains as such, to *appoint Fasts and Thanksgivings* simply by his own Power; yet, not only was the *intrinsic Power* of the Church *despised*, some Time after the *Revolution*, in the *Appointment* of several *Fasts and Thanksgivings* merely by *Civil Authority*; but, of late Years, while the *Judicatories* have *practically surrendered* this *intrinsic Power* to the *Magistrate*, he hath also *practically assumed and exercised* the same, in *appointing Fasts* merely by his own Authority: For, whatever was his Design, yet this was plainly the Design of his *Appointments*, in regard the *Judicatories accepted* the same, as *Answers* to their *Petitions* for his *nominating* the Day; and he hath never *discouraged* them, in their said *Surrender and Acceptance*: Against all which, this Presbytery maintain a *stated Testimony*, tho' they have not reckoned it necessary to *apply* the same, on *repeated Occasions*, otherways than by their *Practice*.

All these *corrupt Administrations* this Presbytery judge to be *Causes* of the *Lord's Wrath* and deep *Controversy*, which he is pouring out upon, and pleading with *all Ranks* in these Lands. And, as by the above-mentioned *Apostasy and Corruption* in the *Settlement and Administration* of the present Civil Government, the Measure of *Guilt* upon the *Body Politick*, and their *Legislators*, is greatly filled up; so this Presbytery judge the said *Evils* to be *condemned* by the *Word of God*; as also, That we ought to be

deeply

deeply humbled for, and to testify against the same, in Hope that the Lord will yet purely purge away our Dross, and take away all our Tin.

The Presbytery, having (as they judged necessary) premised this Testimony for our ancient Civil Reformation, and against the Apostasy therefrom, and Opposition thereto; they now proceed unto the Second Clause of the forementioned Paragraph and Act, which hath given Rise to Mr. Nairn's Dissent and Secession. What the Presbytery have yet ado here, is to vindicate their condemning "The dangerous Extreme, of impugning the present Civil Authority over these Nations, and Subjection thereto, in lawful Commands." The Condemnation whereof may be sufficiently vindicated, by defending that Principle which the Presbytery maintain in Opposition thereto. And, here, for determining the true State of the Question, from the industrious Misrepresentation whereof, Mr. Nairn's Scheme hath hitherto borrowed all its Defence and Reputation; it is necessary to premise, that,

1st, The Question is not, whether we ought to own the Authority of mere Usurpers or habitual Tyrants, even in any lawful Commands.

Mere Usurpers can have no lawful Authority: and, if they shall acquire the Consent of the People, whether expressed, or tacit (as was the Case of Caesar with the Jewish People) they then cease to be mere Usurpers, and are invested with Authority, whereunto God commands Subjection and Obedience in Matters lawful.

Again, in order to render one an habitual Tyrant, it is, at least, necessary, that he leave ruling by just Laws, and that he be engaged in War against the Lives, or invading and overthrowing the avowed Liberties and Privileges of the Nation, civil and religious; or all of these; as was the Case in persecuting Times before the Revolution. It cannot be supposed that such a Person has any real Consent of the Nation to rule, whence he can have no lawful Authority.

Thus, however quietly and orderly one may be obliged to live, under mere Usurpers, or habitual Tyrants, yet there should be no Acknowledgment of their Authority, as binding upon the Conscience. But, if any should have the Face to alledge, That our present Rulers do any Way deserve these Characters, it is quite needless to reason with them.

2^{dly}, The the Question is not, whether we should disobey the unlawful Commands, and may defend ourselves against the Oppression of Rulers.

The Presbytery's Principle of Subjection and Obedience doth only

only respect Things *lawful*; nor is it at all *inconsistent* with any *Self-Defence*, that is *necessary*, *lawful* and *expedient*, according to the *Word of God*, and *right Reason*; such as our *worthy Ancestors* endeavoured at *Pentland* and *Bothwell*: Yea, there is *no Manner of Inconsistency*, betwixt being in a *Posture of Self-Defence* against *particular Injuries* offered by a *Magistrate*, and an *owning*, at the *same Time*, his *Title* and *Authority* in what *lawful Commands* he may impose.

3dly, The Question is *not*, what *Magistrates ought* to be, or do. There is *nothing* this Way incumbent upon them, by the *Word of God*, or our *Covenants*, which the *Presbytery* do *not acknowledge* and *plead* for: Nor does their *Principle* anent *Subjection* and *Obedience*, *homologate* the *least Defect* in these Things, or *bind up* from endeavouring in our several *Capacities*, to have *Magistrates reformed*, according to the *said Obligation*.

4thly, The Question is *not*, whether the present *Civil Government* be chargeable with *many gross Corruptions*, both *habitual* and *actual*.

Mr. *Nairn* endeavours to make the *World* believe that the *Presbytery's Principle* has some *favourable Aspect* upon the *Corruptions* of the *Government* (*viz.* these that are properly *irreligious*) and that *his own Scheme* doth only set up for *more Faithfulness* in that Respect. However, the *Presbytery* *confess* and *condemn*, not only the *actual Corruptions*, or *corrupt Administrations*, which it is *competent* for them, as a *Court of Christ*, to meddle with, particularly, these *above* mentioned; but also the *Apostasy* from the former *reforming Deed of Constitution*, and the *Corruption* of the *present Settlement*, which have, in some Measure, been laid open. Only they *cannot grant* that the *Civil Nature* and *Authority* of the *Constitution* are, thereby, *subverted* or *invalidated*.

5thly, The Question is *not*, whether it be *lawful* for us, to *swear* the *present Allegiance* to the *Civil Government*, which the *Presbytery* acknowledge they *cannot do*: Seeing there are *no Oaths* to the *Government*, in *being*, but what *exclude* the *Oath* of our *Covenants*, or *homologate* the *united Constitution*. And Mr. *Nairn* had no *Occasion* to make repeated mention, in his *Dissents* and *Secession*, of *swearing Allegiance*; as he had *never* any *Ground* given him, by the *Presbytery*, to *suppose* that they had any *View* thereof, *different* from what is *above* expressed.

And now, it is abundantly evident, that the *true State* of the *Question* extends *no farther* than *this*, *viz.*

As by the *Word of God* and our *Covenants*, we are *inviolably*

bly bound, in our several Capacities, to *confess, oppose, and testify* against all the *Corruptions and Evils* of the *present Civil Government* over these Nations, whereby the *Reformation*, once *established* therein, has been *departed from, opposed, or overthrown*: OUGHT we not, at the *same Time*, to *acknowledge* the *Civil Authority* of the said Government, in the *Administration and Commands* thereof that are *lawful*, and to *yield Subjection* thereunto in *these Circumstances*?

It is only in *so far* as Mr. Nairn answers this Question in the *negative*, that the Presbytery has any *Controversy* with him, anent the *Civil Authority* of the *present Government*. The Presbytery *AFFIRMS*, That we *ought to acknowledge* the *present Civil Authority* over these Nations, and *Subjection* thereunto, in *lawful Commands*; according as this their *Principle* is held forth in their *Act*, passed at *Edinburgh, February 3. 1743.* which is to be *subjoined* unto this *Declaration*. And, for *Defence* of this *Principle*, they *affirm*, in the *Manner* following, That it is *agreeable* to the *plain Tenor of Scripture*, and to the *Principles of all the Reformed Churches*, particularly of *this Church*, in her *Confession and Covenants*; where it will also *appear*, that the Presbytery had *just Ground* to *condemn* the *opposite Scheme* now on Foot.

To proceed then,

FIRST, The Presbytery's *Principle* anent the *present Civil Government*, as *above* declared, is *agreeable* to the *plain Tenor of Scripture*.

The *Verdict of Scripture* in this Matter, is not comprehended in *some few, dark, or transitory Hints*. The *Principle* for which the Presbytery now contends, is *obviously taught, and confirmed* by a *great Number of Passages* throughout *holy Writ*: Yea, there are *few Truths*, relative to the *Practice of Christians*, that are *more clearly taught* in the Word, or *more inculcated*, than *this* is. But it may suffice, at present, to adduce a few *Scripture Precepts and Examples*, *expresly confirming* the *Principle* maintained by the Presbytery, as *above* mentioned.

I. It is *held forth* unto us by *Scripture-Precepts*, which are of *perpetual Obligation*.

The *first* that shall be noticed, is recorded *Prov. xxiv. 21.* *My Son, fear thou the Lord, and the King: And meddle not with them that are given to Change.* Though these Words be expressed in the *singular Number*, it would be superfluous to prove, That they must be taken in a *plural Sense*, determining the *Duty*, particularly, of the *Lord's People* toward *Kings*: Nor could *Solomon*, while himself a *King*, be *partial* in this Case, because he spoke as *moved by the Holy Ghost*.

The *former Clause* of this *Precept* is *positive*, *My Son, fear thou*

thou the Lord, and the King. And the first thing which, in the present Case, must be considered, is the *Duty* here prescribed toward Kings, *viz.* to *fear* them. This *Fear* cannot be of a *flavish* Sort, because it is *commanded*, and that as *subordinate* unto the *Fear* of the *Lord*. Again, this *Fear* cannot *merely* signify that *Disposition* of *Mind*, which we ought to have toward Kings. But, as the *Fear* of the *Lord*, in *Scripture-Style*, doth signify, *not only*, an *inward Disposition of Mind*, but *also* all these *external Duties* that we owe to *him*; so the *Fear* of *Kings* must *also* denote all these *external Duties* that we owe to *them*. Now, from the *Nature* of the thing, all *such* Duties are reduceable to these *two Heads*. *First*, We must confess that they are *Kings*, by *owning* their *Authority*, and *submitting* to their *just Laws*. *Secondly*, That this *Acknowledgment* and *Submission* may not be *treacherous*, we must, in our several *Capacities*, *testify* against all these particular *Evils*, whereby they *answer not*, or *contradict* the *Duty* of *Kings*. These are the *Parts* of *Fear* toward *Kings*, so *inseparable*, that *neither* of them can be *duly* managed, *unless* they be *jointly* exercised. And this is *just* what the *Presbytery asserts* with respect to the *present Civil Government*.

The *next* thing to be considered here is, the *Objects* of the *Duty* enjoined, *viz.* *Kings*; and, upon this *Head*, it must be premised, that, as the *different Forms* of *Civil Government* agree in their *general Nature*, and as *none* of them has any *Institution exclusive* of *others*; so the *general Rule* of *Duty* toward the *Supreme Legislative Power* under *any one* of these *Forms*, answers as well under them *all*; however, it is *Monarchical* or *Kingly Government*, that is here *immediately* respected.

The *Question* will now be, What *Sort* of *Kings* are the *People* of *God* thus commanded to *fear*? And, in the *first* place, it is *certain*, that they are commanded to *fear only such* as are acknowledged by the *Kingdom they are in*, while none else are *Kings* with respect to them. In the *next* place, It is *as certain*, that they are commanded to *fear any* whom that *Kingdom* acknowledges as *Kings*, and *while* they do so. For,

1. This *Precept* was still *handed down* to the *Jews*, from *one Generation* to *another*, as *Part* of the *Oracles* of *God*, immediately committed unto them; nor was it, at *any Time*, *altered*, *limited*, or *suspended*; and, therefore, it *continued* always an *uniform Rule* of *Duty* from *God*, unto them, with reference to *whatever Kings* were acknowledged as *such*, by the *Kingdoms* of *Judah* and *Israel*; though *most* of these were chargeable with *unparallel'd Evils*, not only in respect to their *private Character* and *Conduct*, but in their *publick Administration*: As it must be still remembered, that, though *God* might justly plead a *Con-*

troverſy with that Land, and many times *did ſo*, both for the Sins of the *Body Politick*, in not attending to all the *Rules* he gave them anent the *Choice* of their *Kings*, and in not endeavouring to reform their *wicked Kings*; as alſo, for the Sins of the *People*, ſeverally, in not *teſtifying* duly againſt, but *complying* with the *ſinful Statutes*, and *idolatrous Practices* of their *Kings*: Yet, while the *Primores Regni*, and *better Part* of the Nation, acknowledged *ſuch as their Kings*, *conſenting* to their regal Authority; the *Office* and *Authority* of theſe *Kings* did, *therefore*, ſtill continue *valid*, ſo as the *particular Subjects* were bound in Conſcience to *ſubmit* unto, and *obey* their *lawful Commands*; becauſe that *Civil Authority*, having its *Riſe*, in the *Conſent* of the *People* according to the *indispensible Law* of *Nature*, it could not be *ſubverted* by their *Deſection* and *Apoſtaſy*, or by their *Kings*, in Conſequence thereof, *wanting* ſcriptural Qualifications.

2. The *Jewiſh People* were obliged by *God* to reckon that, in the *Matter* of this Precept, they were but on a *Level* with the *People* of all *other Kingdoms*, in reſpect of *whatever Kings* were thereby acknowledged; and that they themſelves were, by *this Precept*, bound to fear *theſe Kings*, when ſojourning in *their Dominions*. For theſe whom *other Kingdoms* acknowledged as *Kings*, are, all along, by the *Spirit of God* in Scripture, acknowledged and accounted of *as ſuch*, and that in *as unexceptionable Terms* as any of the *Jewiſh Kings* are; in regard there is not the *leaſt Word* in Scripture, which ſo much as *inſinuates*, that theſe *Kingdoms* were *wrong* in thus acknowledging them; but, on the contrary, the Scripture always *countenances* them in doing ſo, and leaves not the *Jews* any Occaſion of *doubting*, that the *Character* and *Right* of *theſe Kings*, did not agree unto *this Precept*. To this purpoſe, when our *Lord Jeſus*, who is Mediator betwixt *God* and *Man*, ſays, by his *Spirit* through *Solomon*, (*Prov. viii. 15, 16.*) *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice: By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth*; it is undeniable, that, in theſe Words, he not only *narrates* the *Government*, but *ſuſtains* the *Authority* of *Judges* or *Kings*: And it is as plain, that not only the *Jewiſh Kings* are here ſpoke of, but *all the Kings* of the *Earth*; ſo that the *Authority* of *all* is ſuſtained on a *Level*. When, therefore, the *Jews* received *this Precept*, with reference unto *their own Kings*, it is evident, that *other Oracles* of *God*, and, particularly, the *above-cited*, did, at the *ſame time*, *necceſſitate* them to reckon, that *whatever Kings* were acknowledged *as ſuch* by *other Kingdoms*, had an *equal Right* unto *Fear* from *their People*; and that they themſelves were *equally* obliged, by *this Precept*, to fear

fear such Kings, when sojourning in *their* Dominions; according whereunto, when long afterward some of them were scattered through the Countries of *such* Kings, this *same* Precept was repeated, 1 Pet. ii. 17. as in *Force* with Application to *them* in *these* Circumstances.

In a word, this Text doth plainly teach, that the *Lord's People*, particularly, ought to fear *all Kings*, who are acknowledged as *such* by the Kingdom *they* belong to; as there is no *Exception* made *here* or *elsewhere* in Scripture.

And, indeed, there was no *Need* of any *Exception* or *Limitation* to be added unto *this* Precept. He, who commanded to *fear Kings*, did, at the *same* Time, know well enough, that neither *all*, nor *most*, nor *many* of them, were free of manifold and gross *Corruptions*. By his Inspiration it was, that *Solomon* saw under the Sun the Place of Judgment, that *Wickedness* was there; and the Place of Righteousness, that *Iniquity* was there, Eccl. iii. 16. However, the Precept given did sufficiently hit such Cases, without needing any *Restriction*. For, as there never were, nor could be, any *Kings* acknowledged as *such* by a *Kingdom*, but who administered *some* Justice; so *all* the Duty of particular *Subjects*, under the worst of these *Kings*, is sufficiently comprehended in *this* Command; as it binds them to acknowledge and submit unto their Authority, in any lawful Exercise of it, while the Kingdom sustains their Government; but, at the *same* time, obliges them, and leaves them full Capacity to testify and contend, in their several Places, against *all* their *Corruptions*, and, in *this* Way, to endeavour the Reformation of the Government: So that the *Subjection* commanded, can never involve them in the *Guilt* of publick *Corruptions*.

Here, then, the Duty of the *Lord's People*, particularly, toward *Kings*, is fully stated; and it is the *same* with what the Presbytery now affirms. Nor is this a Duty of small Importance, while the *Fear* of the *King* is commanded jointly with the *Fear* of the *Lord*; and so, whatever Religion any profess toward God, they will not be found duly upright therein, when contradicting the Duty toward *Kings*, which God here requireth.

The latter Clause of this Precept is negative, *Meddle not with them that are given to Change*.

For understanding this, it must first be considered, who are the *Persons* referred to by the Pronoun [*them*;] and it is needless to prove, because so evident, that the Text will not admit of any other Sense here, than to understand it of *those* who are bound to fear the *Lord*, and the *King*, who yet are given to *Change*, and whom, therefore, the sincerer Sort are discharged to meddle with.

And, now, it is *supposed*, that there will readily be *some Men* given to *Change*, Men of a *restless Spirit*, of a *double Mind*, and of an *unstable Conduct*; Men *addicted to Novelties*; and who, particularly, will *depart* out of the *old Road* of Duty toward *Civil Superiors*, upon *new Pretences*. And where *Innovations* are made *here*, there will readily be *some Change* in the *Profession* or *Practice of Religion*; as the *Fear* of the *Lord* and the *King*, are *linked* together, and the *Text* speaks *jointly* of being given to *Change* in *both*.

At the same time, it is here *implied*, that even the *Children of God* are in *Danger* of *meddling* with such Persons, and have *special Need* to be upon their *Guard* against them.

Thus, in their Words, there is an express *Condemnation* of *Changes* from the *old Path* of Duty towards *Civil superiors*.

Again, there is here a solemn *Charge* given to the *Sons of God*, to notice the *Danger* they are in of being *led aside* by the *specious Pretences* that such Persons may use, and not so much as to *meddle* with them; for if they stand not at a *Distance*, they may readily be *entangled*.

Moreover, this *Caution* and *Charge* is a plain *Confirmation* of, and a *Fence* that *God* hath set about that very *Principle* and *Conduct*, which the *Presbytery* does maintain from this *Text*.

THE next *Precept* that shall be considered, is found, *Ecc. x. 4. If the Spirit of the Ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy Place; for yielding pacifieth great Offences*. And here the following *Observations* may be made.

1. For the *same Reasons* that were advanced upon the *former Text*, this must necessarily be understood as spoken to the *Lord's People*, with reference to *any Rulers* presently acknowledged by the *Civil State* which they belong to.

2. There is a *Supposition* here made, *If the Spirit of the Ruler rise up against thee*. This *Rising up* of Spirit must be understood as *groundless*, and therefore *sinful*; because the Person spoke to is supposed not, *as yet*, to have *left his Place* or *Duty*. Again, this *rising Spirit* must be understood as *venting* itself, by *Word* or *Action*; for, otherways, it could have no *Tendency* to drive a Person out of his *Place*; and, as the *Expression* is *general*, without being confined unto any certain *Occasion* or *Degree* of *Rising-up*, or unto any particular *Manner* of *venting* itself, it will therefore necessarily comprehend any *Wrath* or *Wrong* that a particular *Subject* may meet with at the *Ruler's Hand*, whether upon *private Quarrels*, or on Account of *Religion*; as *Enmity* against *Religion* is vented always upon the *Professors* thereof.

3. There is a *Direction* here given, *Leave not thy Place*: Which cannot be taken in a *local Sense*, on several Accounts, and,

and, particularly, because *then* the next Words, (*viz. For Yielding pacifieth great Offences,*) instead of being a Reason for this Command, would be a plain Contradiction of it. The Words must therefore be taken in a *moral Sense*, as respecting the *special Business* and *Duty* of the *Subject*, which, as hath been considered, is to *fear* the King or Ruler. The *first two* Clauses, then, of this Text, do plainly teach us, That, upon Supposition of a Ruler's being so corrupt, as, without just Ground, to discountenance, discourage, or distress the Subject, upon personal or religious Accounts; the Subject must not, in the mean time, repay him Evil for Evil; but, while he is bound to use lawful Endeavours, as his Calling gives Access, for Self-preservation, for vindicating his Innocency, and the Cause for which he suffers, and for having the Government reformed; he must, at the same Time, continue in Subjection and Obedience to the Ruler, in lawful Matters, while the Civil State continues to acknowledge him. And, as this can be no Way inconsistent with his faithful Endeavours otherways; so hereby he will approve himself unto God and Men, as single, self-denied, and conscientious in these Endeavours. But,

4. There is a Reason added to this Command, *For Yielding pacifieth great Offences.* This Clause cannot consist with the former, unless it be taken in a *Moral Sense*. And, as a Reason is here given of the foregoing Command, so it cannot make Sense, unless this Yielding be understood as the same Thing with the Duty commanded. And therefore, the meaning will be this, *Leave not, or keep, thy Place; for Yielding, or the keeping of thy Place, pacifieth great Offences.*

Here, then, we are informed, that, when the Spirit of the Ruler riseth up unjustly against the Subject, corrupt Nature (as is evidently seen in the present Controversy) is ready to manage a selfish Opposition, in retaliating the Ruler, by transgressing also the Rule of Duty toward him: And, therefore, the Subject's keeping by his Duty in that Case, is fitly called an Yielding, as it is contrary to that selfish Opposition which corrupt Nature is inclin'd unto.

It is said, that this Yielding pacifieth great Offences: And it does so in two Ways.

(1.) By Way of Antidote. For the Subject's standing to his Duty in that Capacity, when the Spirit of the Ruler riseth up against him, is an *habile* Mean for convincing the Ruler of his Error, and for extinguishing the Offence he has taken.

(2.) By Way of Anticipation; as it is an *habile* Mean for preventing farther Evils and Extremes, which both the Ruler and the Subject may afterwards be driven to, if once the Subject leave

leave his Place: For the Beginning of strife is as when one letteth out Water; therefore (saith the Lord) leave off Contention, before it be meddled with; Prov. xvii. 14.

And, upon the whole, it is very evident from *this* Text, that the Scheme of such as *oppose* what the Presbytery here *affirms*, as it is a *leaving [their] Place*, because of the unwarrantable *Opposition* that the Ruler stands in to *them*, in any Cause of Truth which they profess; so it is a *direct Breach* of God's Command, and has a *proper Tendency* to *perpetuate* these *Errors* or *Evils* where-with the Ruler is chargeable, instead of *reforming him*; yea, it is *properly calculated*, for *driving* both him and *them* farther forward into *great Offences*: And, on the *other* hand, it is as plain, that the Principle and Conduct which the Presbytery maintains, is openly *held forth* and expressly *enjoined* by God's Command; and that it is a *Mean* and *Method* of God's Appointment, for *pacifying great Offences*, viz. in *reforming* the Magistrate from his *present Corruptions*, in *preventing* the farther *Growth* thereof, and in *preserving* the Lord's People from *other Evils* and *Extremes* they may be *driven* to, in this Time of Tryal and Temptation, if they study not to *keep their Place*, as above-explained.

The *Third Precept*, which the Presbytery adduces for confirming the Principle here maintained, is delivered by our Lord, Luke xx. 25. *Render therefore unto Caesar the Things which be Caesar's, and unto God the Things which be God's.* And, for the clearing of this Text, there are several Things to be considered; viz.

1mo, A *Question* was now proposed unto our Lord, anent a certain People's Subjection to a certain Ruler. The People were not *Gentiles*, or such as had never been *reformed*, but *Jews*, a People in *Covenant* with God, whom the Lord had chosen to be a *peculiar People* unto himself, above all the Nations that were upon the Earth. Again, the Ruler was *Caesar*, an *Heathen*, who, at this Time, did *actually rule* over the *Jewish People*, being, by *them*, acknowledged as *their King*, John xix. 15.

2do, The *Question* proposed to our Lord anent that People, and this Ruler, was, *Is it lawful for us to give Tribute unto Caesar or no?* The *Question* is *not*, whether any *Tribute* allotted to the Use of the *Temple*, should be *alienated* unto *Caesar's Use*; but it is anent paying of *Tribute* in *general*, as an *Effect* and *Token* of their *Subjection* unto *Caesar*. And unto this *general Question* our Lord answers, in the Words above-cited.

When his *Answer* is considered, it appears too *bold* to pretend that, therein, he *shifts* the *Question*, and *leaves Caesar's Title* unto *Tribute* from the *Jews*, *undetermined*. For,

1. It is *very true* that these hypocritical *Spies*, who put the

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Question to our Lord, were sent out by the chief Priests and the Scribes, upon a *captious* and very *wicked* Design, which they were at Liberty to pursue more *privately*, or *before the People*; as they should find Occasion: And, accordingly, when they did now *question him before the People*, it was not for *Information*, as if they doubted anent paying of Tribute to Caesar; but it was, that *they might take hold of his Words* (or *entangle him*, as *Matth. xxii. 15.*) And it is equally true, that, as he perceived their *Craftiness*, and rebuked them for it; so he gave them an *Answer* that disappointed them: For *they could not take hold of his Words before the People*; and *they marvelled at his Answer, and held their Peace*. Their Disappointment, then, did ly here, that *they could not take hold of his Words before the People*, which was the *malicious Errand* they had been sent out upon: And this does not signify, that they could not *understand* his Words; for then their *wicked Errand* had been no more than to *understand* what he spoke, which is *absurd*: But the meaning is, That they could not *entangle* him, or make an *Handle* of his Words *against* him.

However, for the farther opening of this Case, it is needful to observe, That, when proposing the *Question*, as they *deceitfully* introduced themselves by professing that he did not *accept the Person of any*; so, they *did not want* that our Lord should *own Caesar's Title*, as if hereby he would *raise the People against himself*: for there is no *Ground* given to suppose that this would have *provoked* them, but the *contrary*; and, besides, they were sent to take hold of his Words, so as to *deliver him unto the Power and Authority of the Governor*, who ruled under and for Caesar, and *before whom*, therefore, they *durst not accuse any for owning Caesar*. And so it is plain, that they *could not presently have any Thing in View*, but that *either* he should expose himself to the Pains of the *Roman Law*, by *disowning Caesar's Title*; or, that he should *own it in such Terms* as would *reflect* or *encroach* upon the *Privileges* of the *Jewish Church and Religion*, so as they might *deceitfully* forge an *Accusation* against our Lord Jesus *before the Governor*, upon the *Matters of their Law*. But in *any such Expectations* our Lord *disappointed* them: For, in his *Answer*, he *acknowledged Caesar's Title*; and, by *annexing*, at the *same Time*, the *Command of rendering unto God the Things which be God's*, he *preserved the Regard and Obedience that were due unto God*, in his *Being and Institutions*, and *determined the just Manner and Measure of Obedience unto Caesar*, so as, however they might be rebuked by it, they could not find *Fault* with it. Thus, he *disappointed* their *wicked Design* in *all respects*. They could not take hold of his Words before the People; they could

could not find him *chargeable* with any *Encroachment* upon either *Civil* or *Ecclesiastick* Law; nor *durst* they alledge any such Thing, while the *People* were present and capable of *contradicting* so false an *Accusation*. And now, they were not only *silent*, but they *marvelled* at his *Answer*: There was *Divine Wisdom* in it, *worthy* of the *Son of God*, and *worthy* to be *marvelled* at, as it would have been every *Way unworthy* of him, and *unworthy* of being *marvelled* at, if his *Words* had contained *no Wisdom* but what lies in *Ambiguity*, *Shifting*, or *Equivocation*. But, again,

2. To alledge, that *this* was the *Case* here, would be an using *too much* *Freedom* with the *Person* and *Perfection* of *Jesus Christ*. He might indeed have lawfully *refused* to answer their captious *Question*, had he seen meet; but, to impute a *shifting* or *equivocal* *Answer* unto our *Lord*, is to *reproach* and *blaspheme* him. For, either *Caesar* had *not* a just *Title*, or he *had*: If he *had not*, then a *shifting* *Answer* would have, at least, *dissembled* and *palliated* *Sin*, instead of tending to *reclaim* from it: If he *had*, then *such* an *Answer* would have, at least, *dissembled* and *dishonoured* *Truth*, instead of *declaring* and *recommending* it. Besides, the *Answer* given plainly bears the *Shape* and *Force* of a *Command*: And it must be very *dishonouring* unto the *Person* and *Perfection* of *Christ*, to fix upon him an *ambiguous* and *shifting* *Command*, or a *Command* that *commands* *no certain thing*. Again,

3. To suppose, that our *Lord's* *Answer* *shifts* the *Question*, would be an using *Violence* upon the *Words*; for, *Shifting* is *inconsistent* with the very *Nature* of a *Command*: And farther, it is remarkable, that,

(1.) Our *Lord* begins to *confound* his *crafty* *Examiners*, by enquiring at them anent the *Coin* of their *current* *Money*, (as the *Tribute-Money* could have no *Coin* *distinct* from *other* *Money*) and he *finds*, out of their own *Mouth*, that it bore *Caesar's* *Image* and *Supercription*: Thus he draws from *themselves* both an *Evidence* and *Acknowledgment* of *Caesar's* *Dominion* over *them*.

(2.) He immediately brings this in as a *Reason* of the *Command*, *Render THEREFORE* unto *Caesar* the *things* which be *Caesar's*. And this Word [*therefore*] can have no *Reasoning* in it, and the *Form* and *Strength* of the *whole* *Argument* must be *destroyed*, unless it be understood to *intimate*, that the *Command* is brought in as *agreeing* unto, and as an *Inference* from what had been immediately before *confessed*, viz. That the *Money* bore *Caesar's* *Image* and *Supercription*. Now the *Command* cannot possibly *agree* unto, or be an *Inference* from *this*, unless it *enjoin* the *paying* of *Tribute* to *Caesar*: And so the *Meaning* is, as if our *Lord* had said, *Caesar* is actually, and by the *Nation's* *Consent*,

sent, your Supreme Civil Ruler, as appears, among other things; from this, that the Money ye use bears his Image and Supercription; for tho' this be not a Mark of his having the Property of all your Money, yet it is a plain Evidence of his said Superiority, and your Subjection: Therefore render unto Caesar whatsoever is incumbent upon Subjects, and, particularly, Tribute; as unto all this he has a lawful Right. — But,

(3.) Abstracting from the Connection, these Words, *Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's*, can mean nothing at all, if they mean not, That Caesar had a Civil Right; that there were things thus belonging unto him. And, moreover, to deny this, would not only be the utmost Violence upon *thir Words*, but would also force a Meaning upon the next Words, grossly erroneous, which could not be ascribed unto our Lord without Blasphemy. For, if Caesar's Right be undetermined here, then God's Right is undetermined in the following Words, viz. *And unto God the things which be God's*. If there be Ambiguity in any of these Clauses, there must be in both; for both God's Right and Caesar's are in the same Terms asserted: And this is, of itself, a sufficient Argument against interpreting our Lord's Words, as equivocal, which some have done; that thereby he is brought in as shifting, and calling in question the Prerogatives of his Father, before that Generation, which stood in peculiar Need of quite other Doctrine.

Thus, that our Lord enjoined Subjection by Individuals unto Caesar, particularly, in paying Tribute, has been cleared: Yea, in doing so, he proceeds upon no other or better Qualification in Caesar, than that he was actually and allowedly in Power over the Jewish Nation, as appearing, particularly, by the Coin of their Money. And it must be granted, that the Command is of equal Force in all parallel Cases; and that, therefore, it plainly agrees to the Principle here maintained by the Presbytery.

The Precepts already insisted on, were given unto the Jewish People as a special Rule of Duty toward Civil Rulers; and, as such, they were immediately handed down to Christians, in these Churches that were planted by the Apostles. But the Divine Care, in providing for their Establishment in this Duty, against all Temptations, did not rest here. The Apostles of our Lord, and by his Counsel, were not ignorant or forgetful of Satan's Devices, in improving every Handle, for tempting such as he cannot detain in Profanity, to turn over into some apparent Purity of their own Invention. And, considering the extraordinary Handles which that subtle Adversary had for tempting these Christians unto such an Extreme, in throwing off all Civil Concern with such Rulers as they had then ado with; the Apostles

were, therefore, specially directed to build some new and very strong Bulwarks, for Defence at this Quarter, and which are of standing Use in all Ages against any such Errors and Mistakes. Thus,

THERE is another Precept, very exprefs unto the Purpose in Hand, which is declared, Rom. xiii. 1. being also explained and confirmed downwards unto the 8th Verse of that Chapter; Let every Soul be subject unto the higher Powers, &c.

The present Design neither requires nor permits, that these Verses be expounded, either wholly, or according to the Order in which they ly: But it is needful briefly to lay open and vindicate the Establishment they give unto the Principle now asserted; so as any who will wrest them, against the exprefs Warning, 2 Pet. iii. 16, 17. may be left inexcusable. And, for this End, there must be some separate Consideration of four things, whereunto the Matter of these Verses is reduceable, viz. The Objects of the Command, the Duty commanded, the Objects of this Duty, and the Reasons whereby it is enforced.

1^{mo}, The Objects of the Command are called every Soul; by which Expression (according to Scripture Stile, the Context, and the Apostle's Scope) are signified human Persons; particularly, all these, at this Time, in Rome, who had embraced the Christian Profession. The whole Epistle was specially directed unto them; and, in the 3d, 4th, 5th and 6th Verses of this Chapter, the Apostle expressly inculcates the Duty commanded upon them, in the Pronouns, Thou, thee, you, and ye.

2^{do}, The Duty here commanded, comprehends the whole of what Men can owe, even unto any Civil Superiors, as such. It is, in general, to be subject, Ver. 1. particularly, in rendring Tribute, Custom, Fear, and Honour, Verses 6, 7. and that, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake, Ver. 5. or, not only from the Consideration of Danger, but also of Duty. This is the utmost Civil Subjection that can be due to any; and all this is here enjoined upon every Soul, particularly, upon all the Christians then living in Rome.

3^{io}, The Objects of this Duty are called higher Powers, Ver. 1. and it is certain, that this Character doth properly signify, not Civil Offices, but Officers; not Magistracy in the abstract, but Magistrates in the concrete; and, particularly, the Magistrates then existing in the Roman Empire.

Toward the clear Perception of this, it may be considered, that, if the Apostle were speaking without any Respect to the Persons at that Time in Power through the Roman Empire, and so excluding them from the proper Right of Magistrates; he would then be plainly departing from other Scripture-Precepts, particularly

larly *these* already insisted on; he would be openly *contradicting* his own inspired Writings, *Tit.* iii. 1. *1 Tim.* ii. 1, 2, 3. he would be openly *condemning* the constant and approved Tract of Scripture-Examples, and particularly his own, *Acts* xxiv. and xxv. Thus, also, he would be openly *commending* what is openly *condemned*, *2 Pet.* ii. 10. *Jude* Ver. 8. But, moreover,

1. To alledge, that he speaks of *Magistracy* in the *abstract*, and not of *Magistrates*, particularly, *such as then* were, makes his Language altogether *absurd*. For there is a *Plurality* here spoken of [*viz. higher Powers*;] and this *Plurality* must be *all* of the *same general Nature*, because it is but *one* and the *same Duty* which is commanded toward *them all*; But it is absolutely *impossible* and *absurd*, that there should be a *Plurality* of *Abstracts* of the *same general Nature*, because *one abstract* thing exhausts the *whole Nature* of that thing. Though then, there be *many Magistrates*, yet *Magistracy* can be but *one* in Number: And to use or explain the plural Word *Powers*, in a *Civil Sense*, and any other Way than as properly signifying *Persons in Power*, is *perfectly absurd*, as being *inconsistent* with the *Nature* of things. Nor is it any thing *less absurd*, to enjoin Subjection unto *Magistracy* in the *abstract*, because it has *no real Being* in the *abstract*, and it is impossible to be subject unto that which really is *not*. In the Matter of *Subjection*, *Magistracy* must always be considered as *subsisting* only in the *Person of Rulers*; and the *Romans* of *that Time* could not be subject to it, but as *subsisting* in the *Person of these Rulers* who *then* were. Agreeably unto all this,

2. It is *usual* in Scripture, that the *abstract* be put for the *concrete*, as there are *five* Instances of this in one Verse, *1 Cor.* xii. 28. *And God hath set some in the Church, — Miracles, then Gifts of Healings, Helps, Governments, Diversities of Tongues.* But, more particularly, when the plural Word here translated [*Powers*] is *elsewhere* used in Scripture, it *always* properly signifies *Persons in Power*, as *Luke* xii. 11. *Eph.* iii. 10. and vi. 12. *Col.* i. 16. and ii. 15. *1 Pet.* iii. 22. *Tit.* iii. 1. The *first* and *last* of which Texts are *parallel*, in the *present Case*, unto *this* now under Consideration. And,

3. To fix any *other* Meaning upon the Word *here*, as if the *Apostle* were not speaking of *Magistrates*, particularly, *such as then* were, not only is *inconsistent* with the *Nature* of Things, *contradicts parallel* Texts of Scripture, and renders Scripture-Language of an *unfix'd* Sense; but it represents the *Apostle* as writing *needlessly*, and under a *sinful* and *dangerous Mistake*, contrary to the *infallible* Conduct of the *Holy Spirit* he was under. It is *essential* to all the Books of Scripture, that every *Part* of them was *needful*, with respect to the *Duty* and *Interest* of Men, at *that*

very Time when they were *first* wrote, as well as in *after* Ages; while it would be an *Impeachment* of *God* to alledge that he ever made *any* Revelation which was of *no Use* in the Time when it was made. But, as the *Passage* of Scripture, now insisted upon, belongs to the *Rule of Manners*, what *Need* of it could the *Romans then* living stand in, if it was not to be applied unto *themselves*, with Reference to the *Rulers then* in Being? What *Manner of Use* could they, in *this Case*, have for it? How *needless* behov'd to be the *Apostle's Labour*, in giving a *Rule of Manners*, with Reasonings and Expostulations thereanent, unto *Persons* who had *no Interest* in it, *no Warrant*, *no Access* to meddle with it? Yea, his *Mistake*, in doing so, behoved to be *sinful* and *dangerous*: Because, if it was *unlawful* for that *People* to apply what he wrote unto *their own Case*, the *Manner* of his Writing was calculated for leaving them unto, and leading them into *sin*. For, while he presseth and reasons with them anent the *Duty of Subjection* to *higher Powers*, he *no where* gives them the *least Hint*, that they ought not thus to apply his Words; he says *nothing* to prevent their doing so. Yea, as appears from what has been advanced, it was *impossible* for them to receive his *Epistle as Canonical*, without making such *Application*: Nor was it otherways possible for them to understand what is here written. For,

4. In *this* very *Passage*, the *Apostle* puts it beyond all *Doubt*, that, when mentioning *higher Powers*, he properly means *Persons in Power*, particularly, *these* whom the *Romans* had then ado with; so that his Words do openly reject any other Sense. For, when giving a *Reason* of Subjection to these same *higher Powers*, he calls them *RULERS*, vers. 3. and *God's MINISTERS*, vers. 6. and, speaking individually of the *Power*, he calls him the *MINISTER of God*, ——— He that beareth not the *Sword in vain*, ——— a *REVENGER* to execute *Wrath* upon him that doth *Evil*, vers. 4. There can nothing be plainer than this; and it is as plain, that he speaks immediately of the *Rulers* who then were. For, vers. 1. he calls them *Powers THAT BE* (*ἔσσι*, a Word denoting *real* and *present Existence*) *Powers* that *ARE* ordained; and, all along, he speaks of the *Powers* and *Power*, in the *present Time*, as *Persons then* actually in *Office*. Accordingly, he inculcates *Subjection* in its several Parts, as the *Duty* of these very *Christians then* in *Rome*, and as a *present Duty*; while, vers. 6, 7. he says unto them, Pay *YOU* *Tribute*; ——— *Render Tribute*, ——— *Custom*, ——— *Fear*, ——— *Honour*. And that *Paul* should enjoin, or they undertake the *present Performance* of such Things, except toward *present Rulers*, is altogether *absurd* and *inconceivable*.

And,

And, now, that the *Spirit of God*, by *Paul*, did here enjoin *Civil Subjection*, in its full Latitude and all its Parts, upon the *Christians then in Rome*, toward *Rulers then in the Roman Empire*, is so certain and manifest that it must be astonishing if any *Doubt* were entertained anent it.

410, The *Reasons* of this Duty, which are here improved, come next to be considered: And these are generally two; The first whereof lies in the original Institution of Civil Magistrates, Verſ. 1, 2. and the second in their Duty, and Administration, Verſ. 3, 4, 6. And it must be first observed, that to refuse any Thing already proven, particularly, the Precept of Subjection, Verſ. 1, 5, 7. as having an immediate Respect unto Magistrates in the concrete and these in the Roman Empire, upon Pretence of any insuperable Difficulty in applying unto them what is asserted in the Reasons of Subjection now before us, not only implies an heavy Reflection upon the Apostle, as writing Falshood, or no Way to the Purpose; but, it is a plain and open Abuse of these very Reasons. For it is essential unto the Nature of Reasons, that they suppose it to be already concluded upon, what the Thing is for which they are advanced; otherways they are advanced for nothing, or we know not for what, and so are no Reasons at all, can have no Light in them, nor cast Light upon any Thing. Thus, in the present Case, before the Reasons of the Command be noticed, it must first be determined who are the Objects of the Command, what is the Duty commanded, and who are the Objects of that Duty. The Reasons must suppose these Things to be already determined, and, therefore, can give no Help in determining them; and, when the Determination is once made, no Objection can be brought from the Reasons against it; because, in the Nature of the Thing, it must be the Standard for trying the Reasons; and not they for trying it, but only for illustrating and confirming it. The Sense, then of thir Reasons, Verſ. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6. must be regulated by the Things already proven: And to proceed otherways, is to wrest thir Dictates of the Holy Ghost, to cast the whole Matter loose, and most unreasonably deny Scripture that common Justice which all Language requires. Moreover, it is certain, that Civil Subjection, in its full Latitude, and all its Parts, is here enjoined upon the *Christians then in Rome*, toward *Rulers then in the Roman Empire*; and this hath been so far manifested, that there is no Room left, in any Event, for coming back upon it. If, therefore, there should seem any insuperable Difficulty in applying unto such Magistrates the Characters here given of the higher Powers; nothing remains unto one, who would deal reverently with the Oracles of God, but to believe the certain Evidence

that *these* indeed are the Persons *meant*, and to *rest* in an humble Confession of Ignorance as to *how* they come to be *so* spoke of. However, that, in their *Reasons*, the Apostle doth no way *contradict* or *darken* the Command of Subjection as respecting these *Roman Powers*, by advancing any Thing which was not *applicable* unto *them*, is sufficiently plain. For,

The *first* Reason of Subjection lies in the *original Institution* of Civil Magistrates, as expressed Verſ. 1. *For there is no Power but of God, the Powers that be are ordained of God.* Here, then it is asserted, That *the Powers that be* (viz. the Rulers presently in the Roman Empire) *are ordained of God.* Yea, it is farther asserted, That *there is NO Power* (viz. no Civil Magistrate) *but of God*, viz. in a Way of Ordination. Now, this lays not, that Men, who are of superior Place in Civil Society, by *bare Possession* or *mere Force*, are, *as such*, ordained of God: For these are not *Powers* in a moral Sense, and the Text speaks only of all that *are so*; or of all those who are in the Possession and Exercise of Magistracy by the *Will and Consent* of Civil Society, as *these only* do properly fall under the Denomination of *Magistrates.* *Such*, yea, *all such*, are here said to be *ordained of God.* And they are so, not *merely* in respect of *Providential Dispensation*, but *also* of *preceptive Institution*: For, the Remainder of natural Light, in the moral Dictates of right Reason, is the *natural and eternal Law of God.* Now, this *Divine Law*, not only endues Men, in their present Estate, with a *natural Inclination* to Civil Society and Government, but it prescribes unto them an *indispensible Necessity* of erecting and maintaining the same in some Form, as a *moral Duty*, the *Obligation* and *Benefit* whereof no Wickedness in them can *loose* or *forfeit.* And, therefore, *wherever* they voluntarily constitute or consent unto *any Form* of Civil Government, under the Rule of *any* particular Persons, whatever Sin be in the *Circumstances* of this their Deed, with respect to the *Government* or *Governors* which they constitute or consent unto; yet the *Deed itself*, or the *Substance* of the Deed, is *always* in Consequence of, and agreeable to *God's Law*; wherefore, their *Governors*, *as such* and in the *Substance* of the Matter, are *ordained of God*, according to that Law; and this is that *Divine Ordination* which the Apostle ascribes to *all Magistrates*, *as such*, and, particularly, unto *these* of his Day in the Roman Empire; while, whatever distinguishing *Qualifications* or *Approbation* God may bestow upon *some*, yet *no Civil Magistrates* in the World can have any other *Sort* of *Divine Ordination.* And, as this did belong unto these *Roman Magistrates*, justly therefore does the Apostle argue, with Application to *them*, Ver. 2. That *whosoever resisteth*

sisteth the Power (viz. the Civil Magistrate, as such) resisteth the Ordinance of God: And they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation, or be condemned on this Account.

The second Reason of Subjection lies in the *Duty and Administration* of Civil Magistrates, as expressed Verses 3, 4, 6. For *Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have Praise of the same: For he is the Minister of God unto thee for Good. But, if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the Sword in vain: For he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth evil.* — For they are God's Ministers, attending continually upon this very Thing.

Now, for laying open the *Force* of this Reason, and obviating any seeming *Difficulty*, in applying the things here said unto *Magistrates*, particularly, *such* as ruled among the *Romans* in *Paul's Day*, the following Considerations may suffice.

1. The publick Good of *outward* and *common* Order in all reasonable Society, unto the Glory of God, is the *great* and *only* End, which these invested with Magistracy can propose, in a sole Respect unto that Office: And as, in prosecuting this End, *civilly*, according to their Office, it is *only* over Mens good and evil Works that they can have any Inspection; so, it is *only* over *these* which they must needs take Cognisance of, for the said publick Good; while, at the same time, their doing so must be in *such* a Manner, and proceed *so far* *all*enarly, as is *requisite* for *that* End; without assuming any Lordship immediately over Mens Consciences, or making any Encroachment upon the *special* Privileges and *Business* of the Church. And, moreover, as the *whole* Institution and End of their Office, are *cut out* by, and *ly* within the Compass of *natural* Principles; it were *absurd* to suppose, that there could or ought to be any *Exercise* thereof toward its End, in the foresaid Circumstances, but what can be *argued* for, and *defended*, from *natural* Principles; as indeed there is *nothing* specially allotted and allowed unto Magistrates, by the *Word* of God, and the *Confessions* of the *Reformed Churches*, but what can be *so*. Now, it must be agreeably to all **THIS**, that the Apostle signifies Magistrates to be *God's Ministers for Good*, concerning themselves with *good* and *evil Works*, in a Way of *Terror*, *Praise*, or *Revenge*; for he does so in a sole Respect unto their *Civil* Office.

2. What the Apostle thus ascribes unto Magistrates, is, in some measure, competent unto *all* such, in *every* Nation or State; and it *always* was so, particularly, unto these in the *Roman Empire*, of whom he immediately speaks, as may be seen,

Acts

Acts xxv. 16. True indeed, the Advantage, in this Case, lies very far on the Side of *such*, as have Occasion to exercise their Office for promoting the Church's publick Good; while, at the same time, they are privileged with, and endeavour to discharge their *other* special Business, as well as *this*, according to the full Discovery which God's Word hath made of these *natural Principles* that comprehend the due Exercise of their Office, as well as its Institution and End. However, as *all* Magistrates have still enjoyed *some* Discovery of these, in the Dictates of Reason; and as they have *always* had Occasion, and been obliged to improve the same for the Good of Civil and Natural Society, in what the Apostle here describes; so there *never were*, nor *could be* any Magistrates, or Persons in Civil Power by the Will of their People, but in whose Administration *something* of this took Place; in so much, as *thereby* God has been pleased to preserve some *external Order* and *Equity* in the World, and to restrain Mankind from becoming *altogether* as the Fishes of the Sea, the greater devouring the less. And this was *now* the Case, with reference to these *Roman* Magistrates, whom the Apostle has particularly in his Eye.

3. The Apostle is here speaking of these Rulers *allennarly as such*, abstracting from *every other* View of them, either good or bad. For, *every* thing he says of them was truly and only verified in their *Civil Office* and *Administration*. Thus, he says not a Word, nor any way enters into the Question, anent their *personal Character* or *Qualifications*, moral or religious; though undoubtedly there was, at least, *much Evil* about them in this Respect. Again, he takes *no* manner of Notice anent their being chargeable with any *Mal-Administrations*, either in a Way of Omission or Commission; though yet it was certain that there *never were* nor *could be* any Magistrates, either *wholly* or *near wholly*, free of these, and without having *much* or *any thing* in their Administration, *besides* what precisely answers the *fair Character* he now gives of them therein. It is evident, then, that the Apostle, without *refusing* that there were *many other*, and *many contrary* things to be said anent them, speaks of them *allennarly as Rulers*, or as in the lawful Possession of ruling Power, and in *so far* as truly exercising the same. In a Word, tho' there were many things *different*, *odious* and *opposite* to be seen about them, yet he does not pursue his *present* Consideration of them *any farther*, than as they were truly wearing, and found walking within the proper Compass and Limits of *Magistracy*: Their Practice did not *always* answer these things; their *actual Attendance* thereunto was far from being *continuai*: But these things were true, and *always* true of them, *considered* in the lawful

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Possession of, and so far as truly exercising Civil Power; their Attendance, in this Respect, was continually unto these very things, because altogether confin'd thereunto. And now, the Apostle was, at this Time, directed by the Spirit of God, to represent Magistrates purely in the above Shape, and that for very good Reasons and wise Purposes: viz.

(1.) His proper Scope toward the Romans here, was to inculcate upon them the Duty of Subjection unto Magistrates; and this could not lead him out to consider such any other Way, than precisely as such.

(2.) For satisfying the Romans anent the Reasonableness and Necessity of Subjection unto Magistrates, nothing could be more serviceable than the Description he now gave of them, while it manifests how wholesome, valuable and necessary are the Purposes of their Institution and true Administration, wherewith alone Subjection properly concurs: And his confining himself, at present, unto this Description, was a very fit Mean for getting a due Regard unto their Office, and unto them in their true Possession and Exercise thereof, so rivetted upon the Minds of thir Romans, as it might not be extinguished by but overbalance any Temptation they could be under, to refuse them due Obedience, on account of what gross Evils they were otherways chargeable with.

(3.) It is evident, that, while the Apostle discourses, in the present Case, about Magistrates purely as such, without noticing any Thing good or bad anent their private Character and Qualifications, moral or religious, or anent their Mal-Administration; his Design was, to let the Romans see, that however deep a Concern they otherways had with them, in these personal Respects; yet, in the Case of Subjection unto their lawful Commands, they were to abstract from all Consideration of them, except as such, or as truly possessing and exercising Civil Power, confining themselves unto this View of them alienarly.

(4.) At the same Time, the Manner of the Apostle's Argument was calculated for discovering unto the Romans the whole Cases wherein they had any Concern with Magistrates, by Way of Subjection, viz. in so far only as they answer the Characters here given: And it was farther calculated for cautioning the Romans against carrying Subjection the Length of any sinful Compliance with them. For, as, in the Matter of Subjection, the Romans had ado only with the true Concerns of their publick Office; so whatever personal Evils they were chargeable with, whether in their private Character and Conduct, or in their Mal-Administrations (as the Evils thereof cannot cleave unto their Office, but their Persons) all these they were to op-

pose, contend, and testify against, according to their *Callings, Knowledge, and Access*. And the Apostle not only leaves Room for all this, but implicitly holds out the *Necessity* thereof, while he prescribes and admits of *no Compliance* with them, save in the Cases expressed.

And now, it is altogether evident, that, in the *Reasons* of Subjection, Vers. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6. the Apostle is *so far* from contradicting or darkening the *Command* of Subjection unto the *higher Powers*, Vers. 1, 5, 7. as immediately respecting the *Roman Powers* or Magistrates of his Day, by advancing any Thing that was not *applicable* to them; that, on the *contrary*, by thir *Reasons*, and what is advanced therein, he notably *explains, illustrates, and establishes* that *Command*, in reference to *these Powers*; so as he could not have discoursed thereanent in any Shape more *suitable* and *pat* to the Purpose.

Moreover, when the Apostle charged and perswaded the *Christians in Rome*, to *subject* themselves unto the *Roman Magistrates*; he thereby obliged them to *conclude*, not only that *all other Christians* and *People* in the *Roman Empire* were bound unto the *same Thing*; but also, that *whatever* Magistrates any Civil State acknowledged, were to be thus *subjected* unto throughout the *same*: For the *Roman Magistrates* could have *no Title* in this Case, but what was *common* unto *all these* in their several *Dominions*, nor any *better Title*, in respect to *Christians* than *others*; and so the *Reasons*, whereby the Apostle urgeth Subjection to the *Roman Magistrates*, were as *pleadable*, unto the *same Extent*, in the Case of *all these others*; as indeed he signifies by the *general Assertion*, *There is no Power but of God*. Accordingly, when the Rule of Duty, that has been insisted on, was specially directed unto *all the Christians in Rome*, it was also (in the *general Nature* and *essential Design* of Holy Scripture) given forth as a Rule of Duty unto *all Christians* in the *World*; plainly teaching, That *all Men*, but *they* especially, ought to be *subject*, not only for *Wrath*, but also for *Conscience Sake*, unto *all Magistrates* presently acknowledged by the Civil State they belong to, and that in every *lawful Administration*; as, at the *same Time*, they are bound to *contend* and *testify against* all the *Corruptions* and *Evils*, private or publick, wherewith any of these Magistrates are *chargeable*, and that according to their *Callings, Knowledge, and Access*. Now, this is *all* and *no more* than what the *Presbytery affirms*, with respect to the *present Civil Government*, as plainly taught in this Passage of the Epistle to the *Romans*.

The *fifth Precept* that shall be improven for the Establishment of this *Principle*, is expressed *Tis. iii. 1. Put them in*
Mind

Mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates, to be ready to every good Work.

It is quite undeniable, that, in these Words, the Apostle strictly charges Titus, to inculcate or press upon the Christians then in Crete, the Duty of universal Subjection and Obedience, only in Matters lawful, unto Magistrates who then were in the Roman Empire.

1. They, upon whom he is charged to inculcate the Duty of Subjection and Obedience, were the Christians then in Crete; for it was among them that Titus laboured in the Work of the Gospel, and them only could he now put in mind.

2. He is charged to press upon them the Duty of universal Subjection and Obedience, only in lawful Matters; for, this is plainly the Amount of being subject and obeying, in a Way of Readiness unto every good Work; which is a Thing quite different from, and opposite unto any sinful Compliances.

3. He is charged to inculcate upon them the Duty of such Subjection and Obedience, unto Magistrates who then were in the Roman Empire: For, it is expressly Magistrates, whom the Apostle points out as the Objects of this Duty; and it must be these also whom he calls Principalities and Powers, seeing (beside some Reasons advanced to this Purpose, on Rom. xiii. 1.) it is self-evident, that the Civil Subjection and Obedience here intended, being actually the same, cannot have different Objects. Again, it is not so much as supposable, that, at this Time, either Paul should intend, or Titus press, or they could practise Subjection and Obedience unto any Magistrates, but such as then were: And, as thir Cretians belonged to the Roman Empire, the Magistrates in that Empire, then being, must needs be specially respected, in the Charge here given to Titus.

How deep a Concern the Apostle entertained and recommends to Titus, anent the Up-stirring of these Christians unto Subjection and Obedience in Matters lawful, to the foresaid Magistrates, is evident at the first Reading of this Text: And, as the same runs parallel unto, and confirms the whole Interpretation of the other Passage Rom. xiii. 1, &c. so, for such Reasons as are thereupon advanced, it must be understood as equally applicable unto all People, with reference to whatever Magistrates are over them, by Consent of the Civil State they belong to. Upon the whole, it is undeniable, that Paul here charges Titus to teach and preach that very same Principle, which this Presbytery maintain with reference to the present Civil Government.

The last Precept that shall be argued from to this Purpose, is exhibited by the Apostle Peter. As he takes notice (2 Epist.

iii. 16.) that, in *Paul's* Epistles, there are *some Things hard to be understood, which they, that are unlearned and unstable wrest*; so he takes care to *prevent* this, particularly, in respect of the Passages that have been considered, while he gives notable *Explication and Confirmation* thereunto, by what is expressed, *I. Epist ii. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.*

What is spoken, in these *Verses*, to the present Case, hath been mostly met with already, all that needs be said farther, shall be comprehended in the *Remarks* following.

1. That the Apostle is here speaking immediately of *Persons in Power*, particularly, such as *then* were, or could *then* be submitted unto, cannot be refused, without an *open Contradiction* unto, and *Contempt* of Holy Scripture.

2. He gives an *infallible*, and the *only habile Mark*, whereby to know *what* Persons in Power were *ordained* of God; while he teaches (Ver. 13.) That all those who are the *Ordinance of Man*, or who have a *Constitution* by the *Consent* of Civil Society, are to be submitted unto *for the Lord's sake*, or, as having an *Institution* from *him*.

3. What is to understood *Rom. xiii. 1* and *Tit. iii. 1*. is here expressed, *viz.* a *Distinction* of these Persons in Power, or Magistrates into *supreme* and *subordinate*, Ver. 13. 14. The *King is supreme* (a Word of the same Derivation and Meaning with *Sovereign*, as they can differ *only* in Sound and Grammatical Construction, *both* signifying, in this Case, the *chief Civil Magistrate*) while *Governors* are *sent* by him, and so *subordinate* unto him.

4. He determines the *whole Matter* in respect of which they were to be submitted unto, *viz.* the *Punishment of Evildoers*, and the *Praise of them that do well*, Ver. 14. However seldom they were inclined or employed this Way, yet the *supreme Power* of the King, and the *Commission* of Governors, could *morally* extend no farther: And thus it was only in *so far* as employed this way, that the King was to be considered *as supreme*, and Governors *as sent by him*, and both submitted to accordingly.

5. The Apostle plainly supposes, Ver. 15. that Christians were then charged with *Non-Submission* to the King and Governors. tho' but *ignorantly* by *foolish Men*, probably because they refused *sinful Compliances*: He therefore informs them of the *Will of God*, That, notwithstanding their Christian Freedom, they should put these Persons to *Silence*, by outthining them in Submission as to *Well-doing*. And he gives a notable *Enforcement* unto this Duty, by telling, Verse 16. That, in neglecting the same (on however *specious Pretences*) they would not be using their *Christian Liberty as the Servants of God, but for a*

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Cloak of Maliciousness; or to palliate some *Venom* of their own Spirits.

6. He orders them to yield such Submission, without farther Question, to *every* Ordinance of Man, *every* Person in Civil Office by the *Will* of Society. And,

7. That he might *prevent* their scrupling to do so, on account of the *Unworthiness* or *Wickedness* of any of these Persons, he reaches, That Submission to them in *Well-doing*, or in Matters *lawful*, should be studied for the *Lord's sake*. If they were to look no higher than the *Persons* of these Men, their Hearts might readily become quite *alienated* from any actual Connection with them; but it was necessary they should look up unto, and reverence *God's Institution* in the Office these Persons bore, and his *Sovereign Will* in choosing to make any Use of *them*, for maintaining any Thing of *publick Order* that was to be found in the World. And thus, being weaned from their *own Spirits*, and walking in *Self-Denial*, they behoved to *cherish* any Thing *just* in the Civil Administration, by *submitting* thereunto, from the powerful Consideration of their being obrested to do *this much* for the *Lord's sake*; yea, to do it *heartily*, as to the *Lord*, and not unto Men; while this can no way interfere with a due Testimony against prevailing Evils, or with due Endeavours for Reformation.

Finally, What the Apostle here said unto the Christians of his Day, doth *equally* agree unto the Case of *all*, with respect to *whatever* Magistrates are sustain'd by the Civil Body whereof they are Members: And this is *all* that the Presbytery *affirms* in the *present Case*.

And, now, it fully appears, what is the harmonious and indubitable *Verdict* of Scripture *Precepts*, upon the Question in Debate, *viz.* That *all* Persons, and, particularly, the Lord's People, ought to render Subjection and Obedience in *all* Matters *lawful*, unto *any* Magistrate who is, and *while* he is acknowledged *as such*, by the Civil State they belong to; being what is every Way *consistent*, yea, *connected* with due Faithfulness, in reference to these Corruptions wherewith the Magistrate may be chargeable.

The clearest Evidence hath been given, that this Duty, which was, upon the Matter, *originally* taught by the *fifth* Commandment, was also, by some Precepts *branched out* therefrom, expressly inculcated upon the *Jewish* People, from one Generation to another, and even *after* they were incorporated with the *Roman State*; yea, moreover, that besides the *continued* Doctrine of *these* Precepts, the Holy Ghost has been more *especially* at Pains, by some *others*, for preventing any *Transgression*, Neglect

or *Forgetfulness* of this Duty among *Christians*. And, as that *Principle* which the *Presbytery* here *asserts*, consisteth merely in a particular *Maintenance* of this Duty, it is sufficiently manifest, that the *said* Principle only maintains a Duty which is *expressly* taught by *Scripture-Precepts*; yea, that singular *Care* has been, all along, taken in *Scripture*, for keeping this Principle *alive* in the *Faith* and *Practice* of the Lord's People.

After all, it is affecting and astonishing, to see any *Opposition* made unto such an open and special *Design* of the *Holy Ghost* in *Scripture*, and that under a Profession of *Regard* to these holy Oracles. The *Precepts* which have been insisted upon, speak so *expressly*, so *certainly*, so *loudly*, according to the Interpretation that has been given of them, plainly *remonstrating* against any other, that there is no Manner of *Room* left for *hesitating* thereanent, even tho' a Person should *remain* *difficulted*, in apprehending the *Consistency* thereof with any other Passages of *Scripture*.

But so it is, that no *Necessity* hereof can occur, unless a Person will *procure* it unto himself: For,

In the *first* Place, there is no Passage of *Scripture* that so much as *seems* openly inconsistent with these *Precepts*, as now interpreted; while no Passage so much as *seems* openly to forbid what is here *expressly* *commanded*, or to *command* any Thing *directly* *opposite* thereunto. And it must be a very intolerable *Abuse* of *Scripture*, to attempt *warding off* the notable Light and Force of thir *Precepts*, by Passages that do not so much as *seem* directly opposite or contradictory; while, even *tho'* they did so, they ought to be explain'd in an *Agreeableness* to such direct and indubitable *Precepts*. But,

In the *next* Place, as there are *many* other Passages of *Scripture*, plainly *homologating* these *Precepts*, in the genuine Sense that has been assigned them; so there are *none* which it is not very *obvious* that accordingly they are no ways *inconsistent* with. If there were *any*, they behoved to ly, either among approved *Examples*, or *Doctrines*, or *Precepts*, or *Promises*, or *Threatnings*, some way related to the general Subject in hand: But *none* such can there be found. For,

There are no approved *Examples*, in the Conduct of Civil Members towards Magistrates, whereof thir *Pecepts*, as now stated, offer to *disapprove*.

Again, there are *Doctrines* and *Precepts*, *expressly* or *implicite-ly* determining the Duty of a Civil State, as to what sort of Magistrates they should *set up* and *seek after*; and there are some imitable *Examples* recorded of *Faithfulness* and *Reformation* this Way; all which *Doctrines*, *Precepts* and *Examples* are here un-

controverted, in full Agreeableness to what has been affirmed: And it is very *obvious*, that the above *Precepts*, in their foresaid genuine Sense, are no ways *inconsistent* therewith. For, as thir *Precepts* do plainly enjoin *different Duties* upon *different Objects*, teaching us *separately* to yield *separate Obedience*, only in *Matters lawful*, to *whatever* Magistrates the Civil State actually sustains; so whatever *Defects* in, or *Defections* from their Duty foresaid, the State be otherways chargeable with, 'tis plain such Obedience only homologates *that Part* of their said Duty, which they perform; while we are, at the *same Time*, left indispensibly *bound*, and evidently *free*, to exert ourselves, by all *habile Means*, in *testifying* against these their Evils, and for getting them *convinced* of, and *reconciled* unto the *whole Extent* of their Duty, in this Matter.

In the next Place, there are *Doctrines* and *Precepts*, expressly or implicitly determining the *Qualifications* and *Duties* of Magistrates, as to what they should *be* and *do*; and there are some imitable *Examples* recorded, of singular *Attainments* this Way; all which *Doctrines*, *Precepts* and *Examples* are here also *uncontroverted*, in full Agreeableness to what has been affirmed: And it is also very *obvious*, that the above *Precepts*, in their foresaid genuine Sense, are no ways *inconsistent* therewith. For,

1. As thir *Precepts* do plainly speak to *different Persons*, and anent *different Things*; so, on the *one* hand, the *Passages* holding forth these *Qualifications* and *Duties* of *Magistrates*, do not, by the *remotest Hint*, imply, That, if any way they be *deficient* in, or make *Defection* from the same, their Authority and *Commands*, even in *Matters lawful*, must not be *subjected* unto and *obeyed*: And, on the *other* hand, these *Precepts* holding forth the *Duties* of *Subjects*, as above-stated, do never, by the *remotest Consequence*, imply any *dispensing* with those *Qualifications* and *Duties* of *Magistrates*, or any *Countenancing* of their *Defects* and *Defections*; but, on the *contrary*, they leave us *bound* and in full *Room*, to *testify* against the same, and essay their *Reformation*, by all *Methods* that are *habile* for us. As,

2. Magistrates are here *always supposed* to be in the *actual* and *due Possession* of these needful and natural *Abilities*, which are *common* among Men. Again, they are here *always supposed*, to be *actually* possessing and performing these moral and acquired *Qualifications* which they ought to have, and these *Duties* which are incumbent upon them, at least, in some *useful* and *continued Degree*; for all this is always in *Scripture*, and by all People, *implied* in the *essential Notion* of *Magistrates*. Therefore it is only in respect of the *DUE Measure* and *Performance* of these

these Qualifications and Duties, that Magistrates can be understood, as at any Time, chargeable with *Defects* or *Defections*. Now this is indeed *such*, as without having attained and engaging unto the same, at least, in some *hopeful* and *promising* Way, no Civil State ought to invest any with *Magistracy*. But, then, SUCH a Measure and Performance of these Qualifications and Duties, cannot be required for the BEING of the Magistrate's Office, either as *essential* to it, or as a *Condition* of it, *sine qua non*; First, it cannot be required as *essential* thereunto; for then it would be the same Thing with *Magistracy*, which is grossly *absurd*, and *big* with Absurdities. In the next Place it cannot be required as a *Condition* thereof, *sine qua non*, or without which one is not really a Magistrate, however far sustained as such by Civil Society; for then, no Person could be really a Magistrate, unless he were so *faultless*. And this is a Proposition (which Mr. Nairn's Scheme necessarily lands in, if it come to any Thing at all, and) which is so very *dangerous*, that it opens a Door for *throwing off* all relative Duties toward any that are not *faultless* in their relative Capacity. By this Way of Reasoning, it will follow, that *Servants* are not to obey their *Masters*, while *undutiful*; tho' yet the Spirit of God says (1 Pet. ii. 18.) *Servants be subject to your Masters, with all Fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*. It is manifest, therefore, that the due Measure and Performance of Scriptural Qualifications and Duties, belongs not to the *Being* and *Validity* of the Magistrate's Office, but to the WELL-BEING and *Usefulness* thereof: But an Acknowledgment of the Magistrate's Authority in *lawful* Commands, doth only homologate the *Being* and *Validity* of his Office, while sustained by the State: wherefore this Acknowledgment can never be *inconsistent* with the *Necessity* of these Qualifications and Duties, can never *palliate* any *Defects* in, or *Defections* from the same, and can never *encroach* upon the *Necessity* or due Extent of *testifying* against these *Defects* or *Defections*, and of essaying the *Reformation* of Magistrates, in our several *Places* and *Callings*.

Farther, there are, in Scripture, several *Promises* of good, reformed, reforming Magistrates, and of *Deliverance* to the Lord's People from any Grievance they presently ly under, in the *Want* thereof: But these *Promises* can never belong to the *Rule* of *Duty*. A *Promise* of the greatest future Good, can be no *Warrant* for spurning at the least *present* Good; yea, the *cherishing* any Good which is presently *bestowed*, is the ready Way of *attaining* all the Good that is *promised*: Wherefore no *Promise* anent Magistrates to come, can possibly *interfere* with the *Duty* of subject-
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ing to any Thing *lawful* in the Administration of Magistrates that presently are.

Finally, there are *Threatnings* and *Curses* pronounced against wicked Magistrates, and People concurring with them in their Wickedness: But it is *dreadful* to suppose, that these are any way *inconsistent* with the Duty toward Magistrates now pled for; as if God's *Indignation* against Sinners, did *dissolve* the Obligation of relative Duties betwixt them.

According to the *Observations* that have been made, it will appear, that no Passage of Scripture doth in the *remotest* Manner *militate* against the Cause now managed: And now it is abundantly manifest, That the Principle which the *Presbytery* holds anent the present Civil Government, doth only maintain a Duty that is expressly taught by Scripture-Precepts.

The Presbytery next proceed to declare, that,

II. The Principle here asserted, is likewise plainly held forth unto us by *approved Scripture-Examples*, that are *perpetually imitable*. A Condescending upon the Multitude of particular Instances that might be produced here, would swell vastly beyond the present Design. It shall only be remarked, that,

1^{mo}. The *Old-Testament History* gives abundant and illustrious Evidence to the Matter in hand. For,

1. There cannot so much as *one Instance* be found in all that History of any Civil Members, refusing, either by *Word* or *Deed*, an Acknowledgment of, or Subjection unto the Authority and *lawful* Commands of any Magistrate actually in Office by *Will* of the Civil Body, in a Way of *testifying* against their Defects or Defections: And *no Examples*, unless precisely of *this Kind*, can in the *least* militate against the Principle now defended. Wherefore,

To argue, in this Case, from the Example of *Conspiracies* against the Lives, or of rejecting, in a Way of *open Wickedness*, the Authority of Kings, would be both *absurd* and *dreadful*.

Moreover, there is an Example of testifying against the *Politick Body*, in their *undue Choice* of a King, as in the Case of *Jotham*, Judg. ix. There is an Example of testifying against and withstanding the *Apostasy* and *Wickedness* of Kings, as in the Case of *Elisha*. 2 Kings iii. 14, 15. and of the *Priests*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16—20. There is an Example of *flying*, for due Self-Preservation, as in the Case of *Jotham*, Judg. ix. 21. of *resisting*, for just Self-Defence, as in the Case of *Elisha*, 2 Kings vi. 32. and of espousing the just Cause of the *Persecuted*, as in the Case of those who stood with *David* against *Saul*. Again, there is an Example of *one King* casting off the Yoke of *another*, as in the Case of *Hezekiah*, 2 Kings xviii. 7. There

is an Example of the People's doing *Justice* to their *rightful and injured King* against an *usurping Murderer*, as in the Case of *Joash*, 2 Kings xi. 11——16. There is an Example of the People's submitting to the *King's Son*, when the *Father* was confined, however, to a separate House, according to the *Ceremonial Law*, as in the Case of *Uzziah*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. Finally, there is an Example of the People's suspending a King from *human Government*, during the Time that God's Judgment suspended him, however, from *human Society*, as in the Case of *Nebuchadnezzar*. But it is evident at first View, that *none* of these Examples (whether approved and imitable, or *not*) do any ways touch the *present Question*.

What seems *nearest* the doing so, is the Example of *simple Revolts*, as from *Rehoboam*, 2 Chron. x. 16. from *Jeroboam*, 2 Chron. xi. 13——17. from *Baasha*, 2 Chron. xv. 9. and from *Jehoram*, 2 Chron. xxi. 10. Now there is no *Occasion* here to controvert any of these Examples, nor any *Need* to enquire in what Cases *simple Revolts* are *lawful*, or in what *not*; for, *however* this be, they are of a Nature *entirely distinct* from the Subject now in hand. The whole Nature of any *simple Revolt*, lies in breaking off immediately from the *Civil Body*, by withdrawing *from*, or withdrawing *Part of* their *Territories*; and then, it necessarily follows at the *same Time*, that these *Revolters* break off from the *Head* of this *Civil Body*, without ever *denying* his Authority over the Members who *still cleave* unto the same. And this is the *precise* Nature of *all* these Examples presently referred to. For we have not the *remotest* Hint, that such as revolted from the forefaid Kings, by breaking off from the *Civil Body* wherein these Kings ruled, did ever *deny* the Obligation of their Authority upon such as *staid behind*; or ever took up any *Testimony* against *any* who staid behind, for subjecting unto any Thing *lawful* in the Administration of these Kings: And it would be very ridiculous, to argue, from a Supposition of its being the Duty of such as *no more belonged* to the *Civil Body*, to disown all Authority of Rulers therein; that, therefore, it was the Duty of such as *still belonged* to that Body to do the same. Thus, the *above* Examples can be no Precedent for some *few*, still continuing *Members* of the *Civil Body* [which they cannot but do, as long as living *intermixed* therewith] to refuse Subjection in Matters *lawful* to any Sovereign whom that Body still sustains: So that, upon the whole, *no* Example (whether approved and imitable, or *not*) in the *least* favouring that Anti government Scheme now by some espoused, can be found throughout the *History of the Old Testament*. But,

2. It is obvious, even in a *cursory* Perusal of that sacred History, That, during *all* the Periods thereof, it was the *general* and *constant* Practice of the Lord's People, to live in Subjection and Obedience to the Authority of *whatever* Kings were acknowledged by the Civil Body whereof they were Members, and that in any *lawful* Administration. And this their Practice in the Kingdom of *Judah* did not arise from any *extraordinary* Obligation they were under to the Royal Line of *David*, as is evident, particularly, from their behaving after the *same* Manner, in the Kingdom of *Israel*: Yea, it is manifest that, before they were formed into a Nation, they lived in the *above* Sort of Subjection and Obedience to the Kings of *Egypt*, and that they did so likewise to the *Babylonish* Kings, when afterwards scattered in Captivity through their Empire.

3. This Practice was never, at any Time, charged upon the *Jewish* People as a *Sin*. It is true indeed, that the *Body Politick* did sin very grievously, in the *Manner, Time* and *Circumstances* of desiring that their Government should be changed into a *Monarchical Form*; and for this they are expressly condemned 1 Sam. viii. 7, 8. and x. 19. As also, upon this Account, the Lord gave them a King in his *Anger*, Hos. xiii. 11. or, they so provoked him, that he then *withheld* the special and distinguishing *Blessing* wherewith they would otherways have got a King. Moreover, we find, that the *Body Politick* were condemned for the frequent and hainous Sin of *not consulting the Lord*, in making *Choice* of their Kings, while he complained (Hos. viii. 4.) *They have set up Kings, but not by me; they have made Princes, and I knew it not*. But it would be dreadful to infer from these Passages, That *Kingly Government* itself, in the Form and Authority thereof, was condemned, or inflicted as a Judgment; seeing the Lord gave special *Directions* and *Encouragement* thereunto, Deut. xvii. 14—
20. special *Orders* for *Samuel* to give actual *Compliance* with the People's Desire thereof (*viz.* as to the *Matter*, tho' not the *Manner* of their Desire) 1 Sam. viii. 7, 9. seeing also he gave special *Approbation* thereunto, by an *extraordinary* Choice of some Kings for them, and not only vouchsafed to give them some special *Promises* anent Kings, but likewise threatned them with the *Want* of Kings, as a special Judgment, Hos. iii. 4. Moreover, tho' we read of *wicked* Kings, who had *wicked* Reigns in *Judah* and *Israel*, as well as in *Egypt* and *Babylon*; and tho' the Lord did, from Time to Time, send forth *Prophets* with a special Commission for causing the People of *Judah* and *Israel* to know their *Abominations*; yea, for shewing them all their *Abominations*, particularly, as to what *any*

any Time, amiss in their *setting up*, and *complying* with Kings; yet there can *no* Instance be produced, of *any* among that People being at *any* Time condemned for yielding Subjection and Obedience in Matters *lawful*, unto the *worst* of these Kings who ruled over them by the *Will* of the Civil Body whereunto they, at any Time, belonged, whether in their *own* Land or elsewhere: Or, which is the same Thing, it cannot be found that ever they were *blamed*, because a Testimony against the Wickedness of *any* Kings they continued to live under, was *never carried the Length* of disowning and disobeying their Authority, even in *lawful* Administrations. Yea,

4. The Practice of owning and obeying the Authority of *all* these Kings, in *such* Circumstances, was what the *Jewish* People were, all along, *encouraged* unto, and *countenanced* in, by the *Example* of *Prophets* and *eminent Servants* of God. David, even when wickedly persecuted by Saul, and lawfully providing for his own Safety, did *utter* and frequently *repeat* an express and humble Acknowledgment of his *Office* and *Authority*; 1 Sam. xxiv. and xxvi. Afterwards, the *Prophets*, both in *Judah* and *Israel*, when speaking *anent* or *unto* the Kings who reigned there, did *always* acknowledge or homologate their *Office* and *Authority*; so that, amidst *all* the Faithfulness and Freedom of Speech they *ever* used, in testifying against the Wickedness of *any* of these Kings, and of such as *sinfully* complied with them, they never gave the People the *least* Ground to *question* their *Office* and *Authority*, in any *just* Administrations; but, on the *contrary*, their Behaviour was calculated for *preventing* any the least Suspicion thereanent, and for *confirming* the People in due Obedience to the same. And it is especially remarkable to this Purpose, that, as the Prophet *Elijah* sustained the *Office* and *Authority* of *Ahab* over the People, 1 Kings xviii. 19. so (when the *Hand* of the Lord was on him) he *honoured Ahab* before the People, Ver. 46. and all this, notwithstanding of what is said, Chap. xvi. 30, 31, 32, 33. and Chap. xviii. 18. As also, that the Prophet *Jeremiah* did expressly own the *Office* and *Authority* of *Zedekiah*, Jer. xxxvii. 20. even tho' this King was lying under the *wicked Character* and *woful Curse*, which are declared, 2 Kings xxiv. 19, 20. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12, 13. and Ezek. xvii. 13 ——— 21. Moreover, when the Seed of *Israel* sojourned in *Egypt*, they were encouraged unto, and countenanced in an Acknowledgment of the *Egyptian* Kings, by the *Example* of *Joseph*: And afterwards, when they were carried captive into the Country of *Babylon*; as the *Letter* sent by *Jeremiah* (Chap. xxix. 4, 5, 6, 7.) did imply a *Call* for them to *set down* under the *Wings* of Civil Government in that Country,

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and to yield Obedience unto *any lawful Administration* thereof (by which Call, to alledge that God *dispensed*, for a Time, with his own Law, is *blasphemous*;) so they were, all along, countenanced in, and encouraged unto this Practice, by the Examples of *Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Mordecai* and *Esther*, who enjoyed *Places* under, or received *Commissions* from the *Babylonian* and *Persian* Monarchs. Nor can it any way prejudice the present Argument, to alledge that the above-mentioned Persons were *extraordinary*; for, as they had no extraordinary *Warrant* for the forefaid Practice, so therein they were *imitated* by *all the rest* of the People, who could not *all* be *extraordinary* Persons, and were never charged with any *Error*, in this Matter.

It is now Time to remark, that,

2do. Tho' the *New Testament* (agreeably to its Nature and Design) doth not profess to lay before us any *formed Course* of Civil Transactions; it nevertheless affords Evidence, that, in the Days of our *Lord* and his *Apostles*, the *general* and *approved* Practice, relative unto the Principle now maintain'd, continued to run in the *same Channel* as before.

It would be superfluous to prove, that the *Jewish* People, who had, before this Time, been *subdued*, had also, by this Time, *submitted* themselves unto the *Roman* Emperors, accepting Protection from, and yielding Obedience to their Government. And, with reference to *Christians* in this Period, it may be noticed, that,

1- The *Apostle Paul*, conform to his own Doctrine, did acknowledge, honour and submit unto the Authority of the *Roman* Magistrates, Supreme and Subordinate. He acknowledged *Felix* for a Judge unto the *Jewish* Nation, so as he professed *Cherfulness* in answering for himself before him, *Acts* xxiv. 10. He stood before the Judgment-Seat of *Festus*, pleading that he had not offended any Thing against *Cesar*, *Acts* xxv. 8. He thought himself *happy* in having Access to answer for himself before King *Agrippa*, *Acts* xxvi. 2. and downwards in that Chapter it appears, what Honour he put upon *Festus* and *Agrippa*, before the People. Moreover, when pleading that he ought to be judged at the Judgment-Seat of *Cesar*, he actually appealed unto *Cesar*, *Acts* xxv. 10, 11. By which Deed, according to the very Nature of it, he plainly acknowledged *Cesar's Office* and *Authority*, and that before the People. And, as no Sort of Constraint could have warranted such a Deed, had it been any way in itself *sinful*; so the *Constraint* he was under in this Case, was what the Nature of an Appeal supposes, viz. a *moral Con-*
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straints, which not only allows but requires that the Action be voluntary.

Nor do the *Apostle's* Doctrine and Practice, as above declared, bear the smallest *Inconsistency* with what he writes, *Cor. vi. 1—8*. For, that which the *Apostle* there in some Cases condemns [*viz. Pursuits at Law*] is a Thing *entirely distinct* from Civil Subjection: Seeing, tho' in these *Pursuits* the Magistrate is acknowledged as such, yet they are no *Part* of Subjection to him: So that a Person may always continue *subject* to *Civil Commands*, without ever turning a *Pursuer* before *Civil Courts*; and, where Subjection is a *great Duty*, such *Pursuits* may be a *gross Sin*. Thus, in a perfect *Consistency* with all the Civil Subjection now defended, it always continues to be *utterly a Fault*, especially among Christians of a sound Profession, to entertain an *unbrotherly, impatient* and *litigious* Behaviour, in going to Law, or seeking Decision of Matters before *Civil Courts*, especially where the Magistrate is chargeable with *Infidelity*, or Difference in Religion; without first using *habile Endeavours* to have these Matters decided in a way of private *Arbitration*; and without rather taking *wrong*, or suffering themselves to be *defrauded*, where it appears more agreeable to the Principles of Christianity, and more for the Credit thereof, to do so.

2. The *Apostle's* Exhortation, *1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. That first of all Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and Giving of Thanks, be made—for Kings, and for all that are in Authority*, (as indeed they could not pray and give Thanks for any but such as *then were*) that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all *Godliness and Honesty*, plainly supposes, that Christians were already beyond *Question* about the Office of these Persons; whence, their endeavouring to lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all *Godliness and Honesty* (which is also supposed) behoved to include Subjection and Obedience to these Powers, in Matters lawful. Yea,

3. That such *ought to be* and *actually was* the general Practice of Christians in this Period, is farther manifested and clearly homologated, *2. Pet. ii. 10. Jude, Ver. 8*. by the open *Condemnation* of some wicked Persons. in despising and speaking Evil of *dignified Persons* or *Civil Governors*, who ruled over them; as an Application of these Passages unto *Civil Misdemeanours* cannot be evited or evaded; and it was impossible that these Persons could despise and speak Evil of *Civil Government*, without extending such Behaviour unto *Civil Governors* then in Being.

What have been pled, are *plain Examples* of yielding Subjection and Obedience, in Matters lawful, to *whatever* Magistrates

Magistrates are acknowledged by the Civil State. These Examples, when compared together, do carry along an Evidence of *Approbation*; but this is farther put beyond all Doubt by the *concurring Voice* of these Precepts that have been unfolded. And now it is abundantly manifest, That the *Principle* which the Presbytery holds anent the present Civil Government, doth only maintain an *Imitation* of approved Scripture-Examples, and is therefore *painly held forth* unto us by the same.

That these Examples are *perpetually imitable*, would admit of separate Proof, as approved Scripture-Examples have the Force of Precepts unto us, in *like* Circumstances; But no Ground of *Doubt* can remain here, if the Precepts already explained, where unto these Examples correspond, be found of *perpetual Obligation*.

That these Precepts are of perpetual Obligation, was asserted in entering upon the Consideration thereof; and this was likewise evidenced, in finding all along, that these Precepts do properly enjoin Obedience, in Matters lawful, upon *all* Persons, unto *any* Magistrate who is, and while he is acknowledged by the Civil State they belong to; as this is a *general* Institution that, in the Nature of the Thing, cannot be limited by *Places, Times, or whatsoever Transactions*.

However, it may not be improper to subjoin here some farther Evidence, that these Precepts are of *perpetual Obligation*. As, *Imo*. Tho' Magistrates may differ vastly, as to their *Qualifications*, their *Faithfulness*, their *Usefulness*, and the *Blessing* of God upon their Government; yet the Precepts already explained, are a Rule of Duty, *equally* toward *any* who are, and while they are acknowledged as Magistrates, by Civil Society. Nothing needs be added for the Clearing of this, but an Overthrow of a *Distinction* that has been made of those who are acknowledged as Magistrates by Civil Society, into such as are so by the *preceptive* Will of God, and such as are so by his *providential* Will only. Now as, by this Distinction, these Magistrates are considered with respect to the *Origin* of that Office which they actually bear; so a Distinction of them, in *this* Respect, into *preceptive* and *providential*, is altogether *groundless* and *absurd*. It will not be refused, that all such *preceptive* Magistrates are also *providential*, seeing it is the Hand of Providence that brings every Thing to pass: But moreover, all *providential* Magistrates are also *preceptive*, and that *equally*, in the *above* Respect. That the *Conduct* of all these may be very far from agreeing *equally* unto the Precept, is granted, and in a perfect Consistency with all that is here maintained; but the *Office* and *Authority* of them all, in itself considered, does e-

qually arise from, and agree unto the preceptive Will of God.
For

The *Institution* of Civil Magistrates is allenarly by the preceptive Will of God, as *the supreme Lord and King of all the World*: While, if the Magistrate derived his Office properly from Christ *as Mediator*, then it could not fail to be an *evangelical* and so an *Eraastian* Office: But, in Opposition hereto, the Kingdom of Christ is not of *this World*, tho' a *Right* to have the Kingdoms of this World rendred *subservient* and *tributary* to his spiritual Kingdom in the visible Church, belongs to him *as Mediator*; and so, in *Subserviency* to his Mediatory Kingdom, the Management of the Kingdom of Providence throughout the whole World, was put into the Hands of Zion's King, *Eph. i. 22, 23. Matth. xxviii. 18.* Moreover (besides what hath been said on *Rom. xiii. 1.* and *1 Pet. ii. 13.*) seeing the Constitution of all *Governments* and *Governors* in the World contains, at least, a Piece of *Order*, it is strange to say, that the least order in the World is merely by the *providential* Will of God, and so merely by *Permission*; while the Voice of all Reason and Religion proclaims, that all *Order* in the World is by the *Efficiency* of God, who is the God of *Order*, and not of *Confusion*, and so in an Agreeableness to his *preceptive Will*.

2do. As the Precepts that have been explained, are a Rule of Duty *equally* toward any who are, and while they are acknowledged as Magistrates by Civil Society; so they are and continue a *Rule of Duty* in this Matter, particularly to all the Lord's People, in all *Periods, Places* and *Cases*. For moral Precepts, according to their very Nature, continue *always* indispensable, and *actually* binding, where there is the least *Occasion* for obeying them. And, as the Word of God is delivered to us for a *complete* and *perpetual* Rule, not only of Faith, but of Manners; so there is not the least *Hint* in all Scripture, that ever a *Time* should come, or a *Case* fall out, wherein the above Precepts should not be a *present Rule*; nor is there any other Sort of Rule in all Scripture to walk by, in the Matter of Civil Subjection and Obedience; so that, if we reject the Use of *that* Rule, we reject *all* Rule in the Matter. Moreover, it is most *absurd* to suppose, that the Apostasy of King or People can render *that* Civil Obedience of a Nature *morally evil*, which otherways would have been of a Nature *morally good*. Apostasy is a hainous *Aggravation* of Sin, but it can never alter the Nature of moral Good and Evil.

For the the farther understanding of all this, it must be remembered, that the *Right* of a People to set up Civil Government, and chuse Magistrates unto themselves, is not a *positive*

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Right flowing from the Divine Favour, Approbation, or Gospel-Grace; but it is a *natural moral Right*, flowing immediately from the *universal Sovereignty* of God, and the Obligation of his *eternal Law*, and thus it is a Right that can never be forfeited in this World, unless Men could forfeit their *Subjection* to the *Law of God*. Again, this *moral Obligation* to set up Government and Governors, is *morally incumbent* upon the *Body* of a People; and so *their Right* to set up Government and Governors, is what they cannot forfeit by any Wickedness, unless they could forfeit *Subjection to God*. Moreover, our living freely intermixed with any Politick Body, doth necessarily bring us under a moral and indispensable Tye unto Civil Communion with them; wherefore, while so living, we can never refuse this without refusing *Subjection to God*: And this Civil Communion with them, as it can never respect any Things but what are *lawful*, can never involve us in any National Guilt, Apostasy, or Corruption.

The Argument from Scripture Precepts and Examples has now proceeded so far, as may render it abundantly evident, *That the Principle which the Presbytery here affirms with respect to the present Civil Government, is agreeable to the plain Tenor of Scripture*. But moreover,

SECONDLY, The Presbytery's Principle anent the present Civil Government, as above-declared and defended, is agreeable to the Principles of all the reformed Churches, and particularly of this Church in her Confession and Covenants.

In passing forward unto the Proof of this Proposition it will not be improper to remark, That, as the *Primitive Church*, from the Days of the Apostles unto the End of the third Century, continued to have ado with *Heathen Magistrates*, from whose Hands she underwent such a Tract of *Hardships, Sufferings and Deaths*, for the Name of Jesus, as allowed her but seldom or short Breathings: so the singular *Holiness, Meekness, Patience, Faithfulness, Zeal, and Courage* wherewith Christians did then adhere unto, and persevere in the Profession of their Faith, detesting the least sinful *Compliance*, and disdaining the greatest Favours that could be thereby purchased, gave an ample Testimony against the Corruption and Wickedness of these Civil Powers, and of the Generations who therein concurred with them: But it cannot be found that ever any of these Christians impugned or disobeyed the Office or Authority of any such Magistrates, in any *lawful Administration*, while sustained by the Civil Body: And what Institutions the ancient *Fathers* delivered, as to this Case, we have a Taste of in what of the same is cited by the Reformed Church of *Bohemia*, in Chap. xvi. of her Con-

session, viz. ' If the *Master* command these Things that are
 ' *not contrary* to the holy Scriptures, let the *Servant* be subject
 ' to the *Master*; ——— If it be *good* which the Emperor com-
 ' mandeth, do the Will of him that commandeth; if it be *evil*,
 ' answer, We ought *rather* to obey *God* than *Men*.'

The sound Doctrine here taught (being the very same with what is now defended) was *retained* and *maintained* by the famous Churches of the Reformation from *Popery*. And,

1. This is evident, with reference to all these Churches beyond Sea. None of them ever manifested the least *Deviation* from ancient Doctrine in the present Matter: And, when the pestilent Sectary of *Anabaptists* arose in *Germany*, some rejecting Magistracy, some Magistrates, all under Preences of greater Reformation, sundry of these Churches (in their *Confessions of Faith*) expressly managed a *Testimony* against them in so doing; as particularly the Church of *Basil*, Conf. Art. xi. condemn such their Principles, under the Notion of, *strange and erroneous Doctrines, which turbulent or mobish Spirits do bring forth*.

But, more particularly, the Principle now affirmed, is *plainly agreeable* to what was maintained by the reformed Church of *Helvetia*, in her *latter Confession of Faith*, Chap. xxx. viz. ' The
 ' *Magistrate*, of *what Sort* soever, is ordained of *God himself*
 ' for the Peace and Quietness of Mankind; and so that he ought
 ' to have the chief Place in the World. If he be an *Adversary*
 ' to the Church, he can hinder and disturb it much; But, if
 ' he be a *Friend* and so a *Member* of the Church, he is a most
 ' useful and excellent *Member* thereof, who can be very profit-
 ' able and excellently helpful unto her. ——— Let *all* the Sub-
 ' jects honour and reverence the *Magistrate*, as the Minister of
 ' God; let them love him, favour him, and pray for him, as
 ' for a father; let them also obey all his *just* and *equitable*
 ' Commands; finally, let them pay Customs and Tributes, and
 ' all other Duties of this Sort, faithfully and willingly, &c.' And it is to be remembred, that this Confession was approved by several *other* reformed Churches, particularly by these of *Geneva*, *Savoy*, *Poland*, *Hungary* and *Scotland*.

Again, the Principle now asserted is likewise *plainly agreeable* to what was taught in the Reformed Church of *Bohemia*, as laid open by her Confession, Chap. xvi. viz. ' It is taught
 ' here with us, according to the Scriptures, That the *higher*
 ' *Power*, or the *Civil Magistrate*, is the Ordinance of God,
 ' for governing the People in these Things which are political
 ' and temporary. ——— They teach likewise, That it is com-
 ' manded by the Word of God, that *all* Persons be subject to
 ' the higher Powers in *all* Things, providing they be not con-

contrary to God, and his Word; first indeed to your Royal Majesty (*viz.* the German Emperor) and next unto whatsoever others are placed in Authority, whether they be good, or unworthy and evil, &c.

Such Doctrine may be seen more at large, in these *Confessions*; as also in the former Confession of *Helvetia*, Art. xxvi. in the Confession of *Basil*, Art. vi, xi. in the *French* Confession, Art. xxxix, xl. in the Confession of *Belgia*, Art. xxxvi. in the Confession of *Augsburg*, Art. xvi. in the Confession of *Saxony*, Art. xviii. and in the Confession of *Sweveland*, Chap. xxiii.

In a Word, these reformed Churches, as they had generally ado with *Popish*, and sometimes with *persecuting* Powers; so their Confessions and Conduct bore ample Testimony against the Corruption and Wickedness of these Powers, and of the Multitude, who therein concurred with them: But (amidst all Temptations to the contrary) they were enabled to retain and vindicate the ancient Principle anent Subjection to Civil Magistrates, the very Principle now affirmed, with reference to the present Civil Government. Moreover,

II. This same Principle was also plainly retained and maintained by the Church of *Scotland*, at the Reformation from Popery; as is evident from her approving of the *Helvetick* Confession above-noticed, and more directly from our *first Confession of Faith*, as it manifestly speaks to the Case of all Civil Governments through the World, in Art. xxiv. ' We confess and acknowledge *Empires, Kingdoms, Dominions, and Cities*, to be distincted and ordained by God, the Power and Authority in the same, be it of *Emperors* in their Empires, of *Kings* in their Realms, *Dukes and Princes* in their Dominions, and of other *Magistrates* in the Cities, to be God's holy Ordinance, ordained for Manifestation of his own Glory, and for the singular Profit and Commodity of Mankind: So that whosoever goeth about to take away or to confound the whole State of Civil Policies, now long established, we affirm the same Men, not only to be Enemies to Mankind, but wickedly to fight against God's expressed Will. We further confess and acknowledge, that such Persons, as ARE placed in Authority, are to be loved, honoured, feared, and holden in most reverend Estimation, &c.

Farther, this same Principle was also plainly retained and maintained in the *Westminster* Confession of Faith, Chap. xxiii. Art. 4. in these Words, [' *Infidelity, or Difference in Religion*, doth not make void the Magistrate's just and legal Authority, nor free the People from their due Obedience to him.] Which evidently amount to this, That, where a Magistrate hath Authority by the Will and Consent of the *Body Politick*, (this being what

properly renders his Authority *just* and *legal*, according to the Word of God) *Infidelity* or *Difference* in Religion doth not make void the said Authority, nor free the People from an Obligation to obey him, in any *lawful* Commands, which is all their *due* Obedience. Now, to vindicate our *Confession of Faith* against the *Subversion* of this Passage, as if it were simply to be understood of a *Land not reformed*, where some that profess the true Religion may have their Lot and Residence; it must be remarked that,

1. This Interpretation lays, That the *same* Act of Obedience to the *same* sort of Magistrate, which is morally good in one Place, will be morally evil in another; which is a groundless and absurd Imagination.

2. This Interpretation charges our Reformers with Error, in receding from the Scripture-Doctrine, as it plainly teacheth. That all Magistrates every where, acknowledged by Civil Society, must be obeyed in all *lawful* Commands: And moreover, it charges this Church with *retracting* her former Principles in this Matter, as above declared.

3. The said Gloss represents our Reformers as awfully and absurdly juggling with God and Man, by confessing the Faith of others, and not *their own*; yea, without telling that they did so, or telling what they maintained as the Rule of *their own* Practice in this Matter; and all this under the Solemnity of that *Covenant Oath*, in Pursuance whereof the said Confession was made and maintained

4. The *whole* Confession of Faith, and consequently the Passage of it now pointed at, was received by the Church of Scotland as *Truth*, and that among us; which appears from the Act of Assembly, August 27. 1647. Sess. 23. bearing this Clause: 'The General Assembly doth therefore, after mature Deliberation, agree unto and approve the said Confession, as to the Truth of the Matter, and also as to the Point of Uniformity, agreeing for our Part, that it be a common Confession of Faith for the three Kingdoms.' Moreover,

5. It were easy to manifest, that the foresaid Gloss upon the above-cited Passage, overturns the Connection of the whole 23d Chapter of our Confession of Faith: But it is sufficient to notice, that the Magistrate there supposed to be an *Infidel*, or of a *different* Religion, is, at the same Time, plainly supposed to be, even where a *Christian Church* takes place; for, after these Words, [nor free the People from their due Obedience to him] it immediately follows in the same Sentence, 'From which Ecclesiastical Persons are not exempted.' And this Assertion is so general, that it holds out the Case to be still the same, and leaves no Room for Exception, however far the Church and Land be otherways reformed.

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It is now manifest, that the Principle held forth in our *Confession*, Chap. xxiii. Art. 4. is the *very same* with what presently is affirmed by this Presbytery.

As to the Principle anent Subjection to Civil Government, held forth in our *Solemn Covenants*, which were sworn and subscribed by all Ranks, it is sufficient here to remember, That, as the said *Covenants* were calculated allenarly for maintaining and promoting *scriptural* and *received* Principles and Reformation, both in Church and State; so it is both *absurd* and *injurious* to these *Covenants*, to suppose that they overturned, *in the least*, any Principles or Duties relative to Civil Government, that were *antedecently fixed* by the Word of God, and the Law of Nature: Yea, as our *Confession of Faith*, and particularly the *forementioned Article*, was drawn up and espoused, in *Pursuance* of, and *according* unto these *Covenants*; it is therefore undeniable, that *no Principle* was or could be maintained in the said *Covenants*, but what is every way *consistent* with what the Presbytery is now affirming.

It is now plain enough, that the Principle which the Presbytery here affirms, is agreeable to the Principles of this Church, in her *Confession* and *Covenants*: Wherefore, the *Anti government* Scheme now on Foot, cannot find the least *Countenance* from our *Confession* or *Covenants*, but the contrary: Nor can there be *one Instance* given of its corresponding unto the Principles or Conduct of *any* in this Land, before the Restoration of King *Charles II.*

But *as little* does this Scheme any way agree unto, or find any *Countenance* from the Principles or Conduct of our *Sufferers* and *Martyrs*, during the awful Period betwixt the *Restoration* and *Revolution*. It is not required here, to manifest the *Agreement* betwixt the Principles and Conduct of thir honourable Witnesses, and these in the preceeding Period. But, for vindicating them against the *Injury* which their *Testimony* and *Memories* suffer, by giving out that they were upon the *Anti-government* Scheme now maintained by some, it will suffice to remark, that,

1. The Powers whom *they* rejected, did differ not only as to their *Administration*, but as to their *Office* and *Kind*, from any we have now ado with. King *Charles II.* after his Restoration, revoked and rescinded the *whole former Deed of the Body Politick*, investing him with Magistracy; as, instead of holding his Office *immediately* by the Will of the *Body Politick*, he, by Consent of Parliament, renounced any Holding of *them*, and (absurdly, against the very essential Nature of Magistracy) he arrogated a Derivation of it from *God immediately*, Parl. 1. Sess. 1. Cap. 5, 15. According hereunto, beside all his other Wickedness, he pro-

ceeded in the Exercise of an *habitual* and *horrid Tyranny*, which came to an unparallel'd Height, *Anno 1681*, when, by Act of Parliament, he reimposed a Cels upon the whole Kingdom, to support a military Force, for *suppressing* the Meetings of the Lord's People; in the publick Profession of his Name and covenanted Cause, under the odious Notion of *seditions* and *rebellious Conventicles*, whereby the whole Land was drawn into a *Conspiracy* against the Kingdom of Christ, and against their own Rights, and Privileges as Men. And, as *James VII.* did tread and proceed in his Steps; so it soon appeared, at the *Revolution*, that their Government had really been a *Force* upon the Nation.

2. Our Sufferers *then* were in a quite *different* Situation from any in *this* Period. Not only were they tyrannically *imposed* upon, to give exprefs *Acknowledgment* of the then Authority; but they were actually *cast out* from under the Wings of all Government, *denied* all Benefit of Law, and *devoted* unto Destruction: So that they by no means proceeded *ultraneously* in their rejecting the Civil Government.

3. The *State* of their Testimony, in rejecting the Civil Government, was entirely *different* from what some are *now* taking up. They owned that they neither did, nor could reject the Magistrate, merely for differing from them in *Religion*; and the Question with them here was, 'Whether a People *long oppressed* with the Encroachments of Tyrants and Usurpers, may *disown* their pretended Authority; and, when *imposed* upon to acknowledge it, may rather chuse to *suffer* than to *own* it.' * Wherefore it is plain, that such a Question as is *now* moved, about disowning the Civil Government, was never under *their* Consideration, nor did they ever give any *Verdict* relative thereunto.

Upon the whole, it is beyond all occasion of Controversy, That the *Principle* now defended by this Presbytery, anent the Authority of, and Subjection to the present Civil Government, is agreeable to the *plain Tenor of Scripture*, and to the *Principles of all the Reformed Churches*, particularly of *this Church*, in her *Confession and Covenants*.

Wherefore the Presbytery *did*, and hereby do assert and declare, That we ought to acknowledge the present Civil Authority over these Nations, and Subjection thereunto in lawful Commands: And likewise they *did*, and hereby do condemn the opposite and dangerous Extremes that some have gone into: According to their Act
passed

* *Hind let loose*, p. 275. *Informatory Vindication*, printed *Anno 1707*, p. 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 65, 66. *Mr. Renwick's last Speech and Testimony*, adhering to the *Informatory Vindications*

passed at *Edinburgh*, *February 3. 1743*, the Tenor whereof follows.

• The Presbytery are of Opinion, that, in regard they had formerly agreed, That it was not suitable to their present Circumstances, to blend *Civil* and *Ecclesiastick* Matters in the Oath of God, in renewing the Covenants; because that the Cognizance of *Civil* Affairs belongs not properly to them as a *Church Judicatory*; and some Members being of the Mind, that the *Reduplication* of the Oath upon that Clause of the Confession of Sins, which was the Occasion of the *Dissent*, would, upon the Matter, amount to the foresaid Blending; that therefore the said Clause shall be *left out*. Yet, that none may misconstrue the Principles of the Presbytery on the Head of the *Civil Magistrate*; although the *National Apostasy*, under which the Lord's Remnant through the Land have been groaning, while our *Rulers* have not only *neglected*, but *contradicted* their Duty, of espousing and supporting the covenanted Principles and Reformation of this Church, whereby they have greatly provoked the Lord to Anger, be Ground of Humiliation before the Lord: Yet the Presbytery do hereby condemn the *dangerous Extreme* that some have gone into, of *impugning* the present Civil Authority over these Nations, and Subjection thereunto in *lawful* Commands, on account of the Want of these Qualifications, which Magistrates ought to have by the Word of God and our Covenants; even though they allow us in the free Exercise of our Religion, and are not manifestly unhinging the Liberties of the Kingdom; an Opinion and Practice *contrary* to the plain Tenor of Scripture, and to the known Principles of this Church, in her Confession and Covenants, and of all other reformed Churches: And that *some few* others carry their Zeal against the Defections and Evils of the Times, to the *dangerous Extreme* of espousing Principles in favours of propagating Religion by *offensive* Arms; quite *contrary* to that Disposition which ought to be in all the professed Followers of Christ, who came not to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them. And likewise the Presbytery agree, That, unless the Reverend Mr. *Nairn* retract the Principles contained in the said *Dissent*, that tend to overthrow Civil Magistracy, they will proceed against him according to the Rules of this Church.

Finally, the Presbytery do hereby beseech and obtest all under their Inspection, to watch against the *Snares* of this Time, particularly, in setting the Duty of testifying against the *Apostasy* and Corruption of our Rulers and Body Politick, in *Opposition* to the Duty of yielding Subjection and Obedience to the present Civil Authority over these Nations, in *lawful* Commands.

mands. It is the special Duty of all and every one, to be deeply humbled before the Lord, for our grievous *Apostasy* and *Corruption*, not only in Church, but in State; and to wrestle with the God of *Jacob*, upon the Footing of his gracious Promise, *Isa. iv. 2, 3, 4, 5.* In that Day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the Fruit of the Earth shall be excellent and comely, for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the Filth of the Daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the Blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the Spirit of Judgment, and by the Spirit of Burning. And the Lord will create upon every Dwelling-Place of Mount Zion, and upon her Assemblies, a Cloud and Smoke by Day, and the Shining of a flaming Fire by Night: For upon all the Glory shall be a Defence. And, agreeably unto this, it is the Duty of the Lord's People, to adhere unto the Standard of a publick Testimony against Corruptions and Defections, Civil, and Ecclesiastical; and to observe the Divine Order in working Reformation, so as every one may, through the Grace of our Lord Jesus, study *personal* and *Family* Reformation, and, at the same Time, may seek after Reformation of the Church, according to the Word of God and our Covenants, as *introductory* unto Reformation in the State, which likewise will naturally introduce Reformation in Places of publick Power and Judgment. Moreover, it is the special Duty of all the Lord's People, to study that their Testimony be in *Meekness* and *Fear*, becoming the Gospel; and to watch against the dangerous Extreme, of managing a Testimony with *Bitterness* of Spirit and Speech, particularly, against Civil Superiors; whereas *Angels*, which are greater in Power and Might, bring not railing Accusation against them before the Lord, *2 Pet. ii. 11.* Nor, in the present Case, can any Testimony be managed that the Lord will accept of as true and faithful, without cleaving to the Doctrine of his Word, as it unfolds the Duty of submitting to every Ordinance of Man, in so clear and obvious a Light, as leaves no Room for any, that look with Singleness and Fear, to ly in *Darkness* or *Perplexity* thereanent; and without continuing accordingly, to walk in the plain Footsteps of the Church of Christ in all Ages: That so when the Lord shall return to these Lands, we may be capable of meeting him with the Church's Confession, *Isa. xxvi. 8.* in the Way of thy Judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee.

Extracted —

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JOHN POTTS, Pr. Clk.

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